Rashi on Numbers
רש"י על במדבר
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Rashi on Numbers

Chapter 1

Verse 1

וידבר…במדבר סיני … באחד לחדש וגו׳ AND [THE LORD] SPOKE [UNTO MOSES] IN THE DESERT OF SINAI … ON THE FIRST DAY OF THE [SECOND] MONTH … [TAKE YE THE SUM OF ALL THE CONGREGATION] etc. — Because they were dear to him, He counts them every now and then: when they went forth from Egypt He counted them (Exodus 12:37), when many of them fell in consequence of their having worshipped the golden calf He counted them to ascertain the number of those left (cf. Rashi Exodus 30:16); when he was about to make His Shechinah dwell amongst them (i. e. when He commanded them to make a Tabernacle), He again took their census; for on the first day of Nisan the Tabernacle was erected (Exodus 40:2) and shortly afterwards, on the first day of Iyar, He counted them.

Verse 2

למשפחתם — [TAKE YE THE SUM OF THE CONGREGATION …] AFTER THEIR FAMILIES — in order to ascertain the number of individuals in each tribe.
לבית אבתם BY THE HOUSE OF THEIR FATHERS — One whose father belongs to one tribe and his mother to another tribe shall take his stand with the tribe of his father (cf. Bava Batra 109b).
לגלגלתם BY THEIR POLLS — i. e. by means of shekels — "a beka a head (לגלגלת)", as was prescribed on a previous occasion (Exodus 38:26).

Verse 3

כל יצא צבא [FROM TWENTY YEARS OLD AND UPWARDS] ALL THAT GO FORTH TO THE HOST — This tells us that no one less than twenty years of age goes forth to the host (cf. Rashi on Exodus 30:14 and Note thereon).

Verse 4

ואתכם יהיו AND WITH YOU THERE SHALL BE [A MAN OF EVERY TRIBE] — when you number them there shall be with you the princes of each tribe.

Verse 5

Verse 6

Verse 7

Verse 8

Verse 9

Verse 10

Verse 11

Verse 12

Verse 13

Verse 14

Verse 15

Verse 16

אלה קרואי העדה THESE WERE THOSE CALLED OF THE CONGREGATION — those who were called upon for every matter of importance that happened in the congregation.

Verse 17

האנשים האלה [AND MOSES AND AARON] TOOK THESE MEN — these twelve princes. אשר נקבו WHO WERE MENTIONED to him (Moses) here בשמות BY NAME.

Verse 18

ויתילדו על משפחותם THEY DECLARED THEIR PEDIGREES AFTER THEIR FAMILIES — They brought the records of their pedigree and witnesses to confirm the prevalent presumption regarding their parentage, so that each might establish his pedigree with regard to the particular tribe (cf. Yalkut Shimoni on Torah 684).

Verse 19

Verse 20

Verse 21

Verse 22

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Verse 24

Verse 25

Verse 26

Verse 27

Verse 28

Verse 29

Verse 30

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Verse 40

Verse 41

Verse 42

Verse 43

Verse 44

Verse 45

Verse 46

Verse 47

Verse 48

Verse 49

אך את מטה לוי לא תפקד ONLY THOU SHALT NOT NUMBER THE TRIBE OF LEVI — The legion of the King is worthy to be numbered by itself (cf. Midrash Tanchuma, Bamidbar 15). — Another explanation is: The Holy One, blessed

be He, foresaw that a decree would once be made against all those that had been numbered from twenty years and upwards, viz., that they should die in the wilderness (Numbers 14:29). He therefore said: Let these (the Levites) not be included amongst those now counted, in which case they must die, because they are Mine, since they did not sin by worshipping the golden calf (cf. Numbers Rabbah 3:7; Bava Batra 121b).

Verse 50

ואתה הפקד את הלוים BUT THOU SHALT APPOINT THE LEVITES OVERSEERS [OVER THE TABERNACLE etc.] — Understand the word הפקד as the Targum does:,מני "appoint"; it (the word מני) is an expression for appointing a person to control that thing over which he has been appointed; similar is, (Esther 2:3) "and let the king appoint (ויפקד) officers".

Verse 51

יורידו אתו [AND WHEN THE DWELLING SETTETH FORWARD] THE LEVITES SHALL TAKE IT DOWN — Understand יורידו as the Targum does: they shall take it apart. Whenever they were about to set out on a journey in the wilderness from one station to another (cf. Rashi Exodus 40:38) they took the structure apart (lit., they took it apart from its state of being put up) and carried it to the place where the cloud afterwards abode, and there they encamped and erected it (the Tabernacle).
והזר הקרב AND THE LAYMAN THAT COMETH NIGH to this service of theirs, יומת SHALL BE PUT TO DEATH by heaven (not by sentence of the court) (cf. Sanhedrin 84a).

Verse 52

ואיש על דגלו [AND THE CHILDREN OF ISRAEL SHALL ENCAMP, EVERY MAN BY HIS OWN CAMP] AND EVERY MAN BY HIS OWN STANDARD, just as the order of the banners is given in this Book (Numbers) — three tribes for every banner.

Verse 53

ולא יהיה קצף THAT THERE BE NO ANGER [UPON THE CONGREGATION] — If you act according to My commands there will be no anger, but if not, — i.e., that strangers take part in this their (the Levites') service, there will be anger, just as we find at the incident with Korah (Numbers 17:11): "for there is anger gone forth [from the Lord]".

Chapter 2

Verse 1

Verse 2

באתת [EVERY MAN OF THE CHILDREN OF ISRAEL SHALL ENCAMP BY HIS OWN STANDARD] WITH THE SIGNS [OF THEIR FATHERS' HOUSES] — Each banner shall have a different sign — a piece of coloured cloth hanging on it, the colour of the one not being the same as the colour of another, but the colour of each tribe shall be like that of his stone that is fixed in the breastplate (of. Exodus 28:21), and by this means everybody will be able to recognise his banner. Another explanation of באתת לבית אבתם is: by the signs (i.e., following the signs) which their father Jacob gave them

severally when they carried him out from Egypt, as it is said, (Genesis 50:12) “And his sons did unto him exactly as he had commanded them”. For he had commanded that Judah, Issachar and Zebulun should carry him, having their position at the east side of the bier, Reuben, Simeon and Gad at the south side, etc., — as it is related in Tanchuma on this section (Midrash Tanchuma, Bamidbar 12; cf. Rashi on Genesis 50:12). מנגד AT SOME DISTANCE [AROUND THE APPOINTED TENT THEY SHALL ENCAMP] — at a distance of a mile (2000 cubits), for it is said, (Joshua 3:4) “Yet there shall be between you (the Israelites) and it (the Ark), about two thousand cubits”; the reason for this distance, which was that of a Sabbath day’s journey, was that they might be able to come unto the vicinity of the Tabernacle for instruction on Sabbath, for Moses, Aaron and his sons and the Levites were encamped quite close to it (Bemidbar Rabbah 2:9; cf. Exodus 33:7 and Rashi thereon).

Verse 3

קדמה means IN FRONT, which is expressed by קדם; and which side is it? The east side (מזרחה), and accordingly the west is termed אחור, the back side of the world (cf. Rashi on Exodus 27:13 and Note thereon).

Verse 4

Verse 5

Verse 6

Verse 7

Verse 8

Verse 9

ראשנה יסעו THESE SHALL FIRST JOURNEY — When they saw the cloud departing, the priests blew the trumpets and the camp of Judah moved off first, but when marching, they marched retaining the positions in which they always encamped: the Levites and the wagons in the centre (v. 17), the division of Judah in the East (v. 8), that of Reuben in the South, Ephraim’s in the West (v. 19) and Dan’s in the North (v. 25).

Verse 10

Verse 11

Verse 12

Verse 13

Verse 14

Verse 15

Verse 16

Verse 17

ונסע אהל מועד AND THE TENT OF MEETING SHALL SET FORWARD after these two divisions (those of Judah and Reuben), as is shown by the position of this statement in the narrative.
כאשר יחנו כן יסעו AS THEY ENCAMP SO SHALL THEY JOURNEY — just as I have explained (v. 9): their positions when marching shall be the same as when encamping — each division marches on that side that is assigned to it. על ידו means, in his place. The term יד does not even in this sense lose its original meaning, viz., that of "hand'' — the area at one's side is termed על ידו "that which is by his hand", being that which is closest to him, and always within the reach of his hand (and not beyond it); en son aise in O. F.

Verse 18

Verse 19

Verse 20

ועליו — Understand this as the Targum does: and those who were close to him were the tribe of Manasseh.

Chapter 3

Verse 1

ואלה תולדת אהרן ומשה AND THESE ARE THE OFFSPRING OF AARON AND MOSES — But it mentions only the sons of Aaron! But they also are called the sons of Moses because he taught them the Torah. This tells us that whoever teaches the Torah to the son of his fellow man Scripture regards it to him as though he had begotten him (Sanhedrin 19b).
ביום דבר ה׳ את משה IN THE DAY THAT THE LORD SPAKE TO MOSES did these children (these of Aaron) become his (Moses') children, because then for the first time he taught them what he heard from the Almighty.

Verse 2

Verse 3

Verse 4

על פני אהרן [AND ELEAZAR AND ITHAMAR MINISTERED] BEFORE THE FACE OF AARON — i.e. during his lifetime (cf. Rashi on Genesis 11:28).

Verse 5

Verse 6

ושרתו אתו [BRING THE TRIBE OF LEVI … BEFORE AARON] THAT THEY MINISTER UNTO HIM — And wherein consists their ministering?
ושמרו את משמרתו THAT THEY SHALL KEEP HIS CHARGE — Because the care of the Sanctuary, viz., that no stranger should approach it, was committed to his charge, as it is said, (Numbers 18:1) "Thou and thy sons, and thy father's house with thee, shall bear the iniquity of the sanctuary", (which Rashi explains to have reference to the iniquity committed by a "stranger" in approaching the holy things), and these Levites aided them — this therefore, was their ministering [alluded to here].

Verse 7

ושמרו את משמרתו AND THEY SHALL KEEP HIS CHARGE — Any post to which a person is appointed and the duties of which he is bound to carry out is everywhere in Scripture and in the Mishnaic idiom called משמרת, an office, a charge. For example, it is stated in the story of Bigthan and Teresh that when they were conspiring against Ahasuerus one said to the other (Megillah 13b): "But surely my official duty (משמרתי) is not the same as your official duty (משמרתך) and therefore we can never meet to put our plans into execution!" Similar, also, is its use in the phrase,משמרות כהונה ולויה "shifts for duty of priests and Levites".

Verse 8

ואת משמרת בני ישראל [AND THEY SHALL KEEP ALL THE VESSELS OF THE TENT OF MEETING] AND THE CHARGE OF THE CHILDREN OF ISRAEL — It is called "the charge of the children of Israel" because all of them (all the Israelites) were really bound to care for the needs of the Sanctuary, only that the Levites took their places as representing them. For this reason they (the Levites) received from them the tithes as a reward, as it is said, (Numbers 18:31) "for it (the tithe) is your hire in exchange for your service".

Verse 9

נתונים המה לו THEY ARE GIVEN UNTO HIM as a help.
מאת בני ישראל has the same meaning as FROM AMONG THE MIDST OF (מתוך) THE CHILDREN OF ISRAEL, that is to say, they have been set aside from among the rest of the congregation for this purpose by a decree of the Omnipresent, and it is He who gave them (the Levites) to him, as it is

said (Numbers 8:19) “And “I” have given the Levites as a gift [to Aaron]”.

Verse 10

ואת אהרן ואת בניו תפקד AND THOU SHALT CHARGE AARON AND HIS SONS — The word תפקד is an expression for “appointing” and not an expression for “counting” (although it is Kal, and usually “appointing” is expressed by the Hiphil of the verb; cf. Rashi on Numbers 1:50).
ושמרו את כהנתם AND THEY SHALL KEEP THEIR PRIESTS OFFICE — the receiving of the blood in holy vessels, the sprinkling of it, the burning of the fat and the other rites which are entrusted to the priests’ charge.

Verse 11

Verse 12

ואני הנה לקחתי AND I, BEHOLD I HAVE TAKEN [THE LEVITES FROM AMONG THE CHILDREN OF ISRAEL] — This means: And I — whence do “I” claim the right on them from among the children of Israel, that the Israelites should have to hire them (cf. Rashi on v. 8) for My service? It is through the firstborn — to whom I surely have a title — that I have a claim on them (the Levites) and so I take them in their (the firstborns’) stead. For originally the service (the priestly functions) was performed by the firstborn, but when they (the Israelites and among them their firstborn too) sinned by worshipping the golden calf they became disqualified, and the Levites who had not worshipped the idol were chosen in their stead (cf. Zevachim 112b).

Verse 13

Verse 14

Verse 15

מבן חדש ומעלה [NUMBER THE CHILDREN OF LEVI … EVERY MALE] FROM A MONTH OLD AND ONWARDS — As soon as it passed the age of a non-viable child (a full month was regarded as the utmost time such a child can live) it can be counted to come under the term “keeper of the holy charge”. — R. Judah the son of R. Shalom said: It is quite the usual thing with this tribe to be included in a census from their very birth, for it is said, (Numbers XXVI 59) “[And the name of Amram’s wife was Jochebed, the daughter of Levi], whom her mother bore to Levi in Egypt” — which is explained to mean that she bore her just as she entered the gates of the border-city of Egypt and yet she is counted among the seventy souls which came down with Jacob into Egypt (cf. Genesis 46:27 and Rashi thereon), because if you count their number (as set forth in Genesis 46:8—27) you will find that they were one short of seventy, and it was she whose name is not mentioned there who made up the number seventy (cf. Midrash Tanchuma, Bamidbar 16).

Verse 16

על פי ה׳ [AND MOSES NUMBERED THEM] ACCORDING TO THE WORD OF THE LORD — Moses said to the Holy One, blessed be He, "How can I enter their tents to ascertain the number of their babes?!" Thereupon the Holy One, blessed be He, replied to him, "You do your share and I will do Mine!' Moses accordingly went and stationed himself at the entrance of each tent, the Shechinah having gone there beforehand, and a divine voice issued from the tent, saying, "So-and-so many babes are in this tent". It is on this account that it states, "[and Moses numbered them] according to the word (by the mouth) of the Lord" (Numbers Rabbah 3 9).

Verse 17

Verse 18

Verse 19

Verse 20

Verse 21

לגרשון משפחת הלבני OF GERSHON, THE FAMILY OF THE LIBNITES — that is to say: Of Gershon, those who were numbered were the family of the Libnites and the family of the Shimites; and the section concludes with the statement (v. 22) "those who were numbered of them were so-and-so many".

Verse 22

Verse 23

Verse 24

Verse 25

המשכן THE DWELLING — i.e. the lower curtains (those which were spread immediately over the boards of the Tabernacle).
והאהל AND THE TENT (the word has not its usual meaning of "tent"; cf. Rashi on Exodus 26:7—12) — i.e. the curtains of goats' hair that were made as a roofing (to cover the lower curtains).
מכסהו THE COVERING THEREOF — the covering made of rams' skins and tachash skins (cf. Rashi on Exodus 35:11).
ומסך פתח AND THE SCREEN FOR THE ENTRANCE — i.e. the Veil (cf. Rashi on Exodus 35:12).

Verse 26

ואת מיתריו AND THE CORDS OF IT — This means: those of "the dwelling" (the lower curtains) and of "the tent" (the upper curtains), and not those of the enclosure (חצר) mentioned in this verse [although some of these are stated in Numbers 4:26 to be in charge of the Gershonites].

Verse 27

Verse 28

Verse 29

משפחת בני קהת יחנו … תימנה THE FAMILY OF THE SONS OF KOHATH SHALL ENCAMP … SOUTHWARD — and next to them was the division of Reuben who, too, were encamped in the South (cf. Numbers 2:10) — "Woe to the wicked, woe to his neighbour!" It was on this account (on account of the friendship caused by this proximity) that some of them (the Reubenites) — Dathan and Abiram and 250 men (who were also mostly Reubenites, cf. Rashi on Numbers 16:1) — were punished together with Korah and his congregation, (cf. Numbers 16:32 ff.), because they were dragged into the quarrel with them (cf. Midrash Tanchuma, Vayera 12).

Verse 30

Verse 31

והמסך AND THE SCREEN — i.e. the Partition Veil, for it, too, (cf. Rashi on v. 25) is called מסך in the phrase (Exodus 40:21): פרכת המסך.

Verse 32

ונשיא נשיאי הלוי AND [ELAZAR THE SON OF AARON THE PRIEST WAS] THE PRINCE OVER THE PRINCES OF THE LEVITES — i.e. he was appointed over all of them. And in regard to what was his overship?
פקדת שמרי משמרת THE OVERSIGHT OF THEM THAT KEEP THE CHARGE [OF THE SANCTUARY] — i.e. by him was the appointment of all of these.

Verse 33

Verse 34

Verse 35

Verse 36

Verse 37

Verse 38

משה ואהרן ובניו [BUT THOSE THAT ENCAMP BEFORE THE DWELLING … SHALL BE] MOSES, AND AARON AND HIS SONS — and adjacent to him was the standard of the camp of Judah, and next to the latter were encamped Issachar and Zebulun — "Well is it with the righteous, well with his neighbour!" Because they (the sons of Judah, Issachar and Zebulun) were the neighbours of Moses who occupied himself with the Torah, they themselves became eminent scholars in the Law, as it is said, (Psalms 60:9) "Judah is my lawgiver"; (I Chronicles 12:32) "and of the children of Issachar which were men that had understanding of the times to know what Israel had to do [the heads of them were two hundred]" — i.e., two hundred heads of the Sanhedrin; and (Judges 5:14) "and out of Zebulun came those that handle the pen of the writer" (Midrash Tanchuma, Bamidbar 12).

Verse 39

אשר פקד משה ואהרן [ALL THAT WERE NUMBERED OF THE LEVITES] WHOM MOSES AND AARON NUMBERED — There are dots on the word Aaron to indicate that he was not among the number of the Levites (Bekhorot 4a; Sifrei Bamidbar 69:2 on Numbers 9:10).
שנים ועשרים אלף [ALL THE MALES FROM A MONTH OLD AND UPWARDS WERE] TWENTY AND TWO THOUSAND — But in the enumeration of them given above you will find three hundred more — the sons of Gershon 7500 (v. 22). the sons of Kohath 8600 (v. 28), the sons of Merari 6200 (v. 34), making 22,300! Why, then, did Scripture not include them in the sum total together with the others, when they, too, might have redeemed the firstborn of the Israelites (i.e., when each of the 300 might also have served the purpose of replacing a firstborn Israelite, as did the other 22,000; cf. v. 41), and thus the 273 firstborn Israelites who were in excess of the sum total of the Levites as given by Scripture, (the sum total of the firstborn having been 22,273, whilst the Levites, as summed up by Scripture, were only 22,000) would not have required redemption at all (cf. vv. 46—48)!? To this our Rabbis gave the reply in Treatise Bekhorot 5a: those three hundred Levites in question were themselves firstborn, and it was quite sufficient for them to do one thing — that they should free themselves from the necessity of ransom.

Verse 40

פקד כל בכר זכר … מבן חדש ומעלה NUMBER ALL THE FIRSTBORN OF THE MALES [OF THE CHILDREN OF ISRAEL] FROM A MONTH OLD AND UPWARDS — as soon as he (the firstborn) has passed the age when it might possibly prove non-viable (Numbers Rabbah 4:3; cf. Rashi on v. 15).

Verse 41

Verse 42

Verse 43

Verse 44

Verse 45

ואת בהמת הלוים וגו׳ AND [THOU SHALT TAKE] THE BEASTS OF THE LEVITES [INSTEAD OF ALL THE FIRSTBORN AMONG THE BEASTS OF THE CHILDREN OF ISRAEL] — The beasts of the Levites did not redeem the firstborn of the clean beasts belonging to the Israelites, but only the first offsprings of their asses (cf. Bekhorot 4a). One lamb of the Levites (it must be remembered that for the redemption of פטר חמור a lamb is prescribed; cf. Exodus 13:13) could, however, release several first offsprings of asses belonging to Israelites. You may know that this is so, for it (Scripture) mentions the number of firstborn Israelites in excess of the number of Levites in the case of human beings, but mentions no number of firstborn animals belonging to the Israelites as being in excess over the lambs of the Levites, [although there were undoubtedly many more firstborn asses of the Israelites than ordinary lambs of the Levites] (cf. Bekhorot 4b).

Verse 46

ואת פדויי השלשה וגו׳ AND AS FOR THOSE THAT ARE TO BE REDEEMED [OF THE TWO HUNDRED THREESCORE AND THIRTEEN etc.]… [THOU SHALT TAKE…] — This means, "and as for those firstborn who are yet to be redeemed among them (the Israelites), viz., the 273 who were in excess among them, being more than the 22,000 Levites, of them thou shalt take חמשת שקלים לגלגלת FIVE SHEKELS BY THE POLL, such, viz., twenty pieces of silver, was the selling price of Joseph who was Rachel's firstborn. (Jerusalem Talmud Shekalim 2:4; Genesis Rabbah 84:18).

Verse 47

Verse 48

Verse 49

העדפים על פדויי הלוים THE OVERPLUS THAT WERE MORE THAN THOSE REDEEMED BY THE LEVITES means, that were more than those whom the Levites redeemed by their own person.

Verse 50

חמשה וששים ושלש מאות ואלף A THOUSAND THREE HUNDRED AND THREESCORE AND FIVE — This is the total sum: five shekels per head for two hundred firstborn if one thousand shekels; for seventy firstborn is three hundred and fifty shekels, and three firstborn give fifteen shekels, — thus altogether 1,365. — He, (Moses) said, "How shall I proceed? Any firstborn to whom I will say, "Give five shekels' will answer me, 'I am one of those redeemed by the Levites'!" What, then, did he do? He brought 22,000 tablets and inscribed them with the words "A son of Levi", and 273 tablets, and wrote upon them the words "Five shekels". These he mixed up, putting them into an urn. He said to them, "Come and draw your tablets and decide the matter by lot" (Sanhedrin 17a).

Chapter 4

Verse 1

Verse 2

נשא את ראש וגו׳ TAKE THE SUM OF [THE SONS OF KOHATH] — Count those that are fit among them for the service of carrying, and these are the men from thirty to fifty years, for a person less than thirty has not yet attained his full strength, — hence they (the Rabbis) said (Avot 5:21) "a man of thirty has reached the age when he enters into full strength", — as for one who is older than fifty, his strength gradually diminishes from then.

Verse 3

Verse 4

קדש הקדשים [THIS SHALL BE THE SERVICE OF THE SONS OF KOHATH] THE קדש הקדשים — i.e., whatever is most holy of them all: the Ark, the table, the candelabrum, the altars, the Partition Veil and the vessels of service.

Verse 5

ובא אהרן ובניו וגו׳ AND [WHEN THE CAMP SETTETH FORWARD,] AARON SHALL COME, AND HIS SONS, etc. — They shall put every object into its wrapping that is prescribed for it in this section, so that the sons of Kohath should have nothing to do except to carry them.
בנסוע המחנה WHEN THE CAMP SETTETH FORWARD — When the cloud departed they knew that they were to set out on the journey (see Rashi on Numbers 1:51, and Note thereon).

Verse 6

Verse 7

קערת וכפת וקשות ומנקיות — I have already described these in the chapter dealing with the work of the Tabernacle (Exodus XXV).
הנסך means, "covering", — having the same meaning as מסך, the screen, — as it is written, (Exodus 25:29) "the covers by which they shall be covered (יסך)" (cf. Rashi on that verse and the Note thereon).

Verse 8

Verse 9

מלקחיה — a kind of tongs whereby one draws the wick in any direction one wishes.
מחתתיה — a kind of small ladle, the bottom of which was flat, not rounded (concave), and it had no wall in front (no piece projecting upwards) but only at its sides; and he (the priest) raked into it the ashes of the lamps when he cleansed them out (cf. Rashi on Exodus 25:28).

נרתיה ITS LAMPS — luces in O. F., the receptacles into which people put the oil and the wicks (not the lights as the word sometimes means; see e. g. Exodus 40:4).

Verse 10

אל מכסה עור תחש [AND THEY SHALL PUT IT, AND ALL THE VESSELS] WITHIN A COVERING OF TACHASH SKINS — This was a kind of packing bag.

Verse 11

Verse 12

את כל כלי השרת אשר ישרתו בם בקדש [AND THEY SHALL TAKE] ALL THE VESSELS OF MINISTRY, WHEREWITH THEY MINISTER IN THE HOLY PLACE — i.e. in the Tabernacle which is called holy; these were the vessels for the incense with which they performed the ministry at the inner altar.

Verse 13

ודשנו את המזבח AND THEY SHALL TAKE AWAY THE ASHES FROM THE ALTAR — from the brazen altar.
ודשנו means, they shall remove the ashes from off it (cf. Rashi on Exodus 27:3).
ופרשו עליו בגד ארגמן AND THEY SHALL SPREAD A GARMENT OF RED PURPLE THEREON — But the fire that descended from heaven on the altar (cf. Rashi on Leviticus 1:7) lay beneath the garment in the form of a lion during the journeyings; it did not, however, burn it because they inverted a large vessel of copper over it (cf. Yoma 21b).

Verse 14

מחתת THE CENSERS into which the coals were raked for the purpose of the ceremony of תרומת הדשן, removing a pan of ashes from the copper altar (cf. Rashi on Leviticus 6:4), and which were formed like a pan which has only three walls (none in front) and with the front of it draws in the coals.
מזלגת — copper hooks (cf. Rashi on Exodus 27:3) which they stuck forcibly into the limbs that were on the altar in order to turn them over so that they might become thoroughly and quickly consumed.
יעים are shovels; in O. F. vedil. They were of copper and with them they cleared the ashes from off the altar.

Verse 15

לכסת את הקדש [AND AARON AND HIS SONS FINISHED] COVERING THE HOLY THINGS — the Ark and the altar,
ואת כל כלי הקדש AND ALL THE VESSELS OF THE SANCTUARY — the candelabrum and the vessels for service,
ומתו [SO THAT THEY SHALL NOT TOUCH ANY THING OF HOLINESS] LEST THEY DIE — because if they do touch they become liable to death by Heaven.

Verse 16

ופקדת אלעזר AND THE CHARGE OF ELEAZAR … [WERE THE OIL FOR THE LIGHT, AND THE INCENSE OF AROMATICS, AND THE CONTINUAL MEAL OFFERING, AND THE ANOINTING OIL] — This means: the charge of Eleazar who was appointed over them to carry them were the oil, and the incense and the anointing oil.

As regards the continual meal-offering mentioned here, upon him lay the charge to give orders and to urge on that it should be offered at the time when they encamped.
פקדת כל המשכן means: and further he was appointed over the burden of the sons of Kohath, i.e., to give each man orders regarding his service and his burden, which was the Tabernacle and all that was therein — all the articles set forth above in this section. The burden of the sons of Gershon and of the sons of Merari, however, which did not appertain to things of most holy character, was carried out by order of Ithamar, as is set forth in the section commencing with the word נשא (vv. 21—34).

Verse 17

Verse 18

אל תכריתו CUT YE NOT OFF [THE TRIBE OF THE FAMILIES OF THE KOHATHITES] — Do not bring it about for them that they shall die.

Verse 19

Verse 20

ולא יבאו לראות כבלע את הקדש BUT THEY SHALL NOT COME IN TO SEE WHEN THE HOLY THINGS ARE WRAPPED IN, each into its wrapping, as I have explained above in this section (v. 5 ff.): ''and they shall spread upon it such-and-such a garment", "and they shall cover it over with such-and-such a cover", — for the "wrapping-up' of it mentioned here is identical with the "covering up" of it mentioned in those passages.

Verse 21

Verse 22

נשא את ראש בני גרשון גם הם TAKE ALSO THE SUM OF THE SONS OF GERSHON - "also" implies: even as I have commanded you regarding the sons of Kohath; i.e. to see how many of them have already reached the age to be included amongst those fit for service.

Verse 23

Verse 24

Verse 25

את יריעת המשכן THE CURTAINS OF THE TABERNACLE — the ten lower ones,
ואת אהל מועד AND THE TENT OF MEETING i.e. the curtains of goats' skins which were made as a tent above it (the Tabernacle).
מכסהו ITS COVERING — the rams' skins dyed red.
מסך פתח THE SCREEN FOR THE ENTRANCE — the Veil at the east side.

Verse 26

אשר על המשכן [AND THE HANGINGS OF THE ENCLOSURE, AND THE SCREEN FOR THE ENTRANCE OF THE GATE OF THE ENCLOSURE] WHICH ARE על המשכן — that is to say, the hangings and the screen of the court which together screen and shelter the Tabernacle and the copper altar on all sides.
ואת כל אשר יעשה להם — Understand this as the Targum does; "and everything that is handed over to them" — i.e. to the sons of Gershon.

Verse 27

על פי אהרן ובניו AT THE APPOINTMENT OF AARON AND HIS SONS [SHALL BE ALL THE SERVICE OF THE SONS OF THE GERSHONITES] — and which of his sons shall be appointed over them? Everything was (v. 28) "under the hand of Ithamar the son of Aaron the priest".

Verse 28

Verse 29

Verse 30

Verse 31

Verse 32

ויתדתם ומיתריהם [AND THE COLUMNS OF THE ENCLOSURE ROUND ABOUT IT AND THEIR SOCKETS] AND THEIR PINS, AND THEIR CORDS — i.e. the pins and cords of the columns only, because the pins and cords of the hangings were part of the burden of the Gershonites (not of the sons of Merari). There were, as a matter of fact, pegs and cords for the curtains and the hangings on their lower edges in order that the wind should not raise them, there were also pegs and cords for the columns, round about, upon which to suspend the hangings by their upper edges on poles and rails, just as it is set forth in the Boraitha dealing with the work of the Tabernacle (cf. Rashi on Exodus 27:10, 19; Numbers 3:26 and our Note thereon).

Verse 33

Verse 34

Verse 35

Verse 36

Verse 37

Verse 38

Verse 39

Verse 40

Verse 41

Verse 42

Verse 43

Verse 44

Verse 45

Verse 46

Verse 47

עבדת עבדה THE SERVICE OF THE MINISTRY — (lit., a service of a service). This is the song of the Levites with accompaniment of cymbals and harps, this being the service attached to another service (the sacrificial service) (Arakhin 11a).
ועבדת משא is what it literally implies: AND THE SERVICE OF CARRYING.

Verse 48

Verse 49

ופקדיו אשר צוה ה' את משה — This means, and those appointed by him (Moses) were appointed under the terms of the command which God had given to Moses (v. 43): from thirty years to fifty years old.

Chapter 5

Verse 1

Verse 2

צו את בני ישראל וגו׳ COMMAND THE CHILDREN OF ISRAEL etc. — This section was spoken on the day when the Tabernacle was erected; there were eight sections spoken on that day, as is related in Treatise Gittin 60a, in the chapter beginning with the word הנזקין.
וישלחו מן המחנה [COMMAND THE CHILDREN OF ISRAEL] THAT THEY SEND AWAY FROM THE CAMP [EVERY LEPER etc.] — There were three camps one within the other whenever they encamped: the area within the hangings was the "camp of the Shechinah", the encampment of the Levites round about this, as is described in the Sedrah במדבר סיני (Numbers 1:53), was the "camp of the Levites", and from there outward up to the end of the encampment of the divisions in all the four directions was the "camp of the Israelites". The leper was sent out from all of them; the person suffering from a flux was allowed to stay in the "camp of the Israelites", but was sent out from the two inner camps, whilst a person who had become unclean by reason of a corpse was allowed to stay in the "camp of the Levites" also, and was sent out only from that of the Shechinah. All this have our Rabbis deduced in Treatise Pesachim 67a from the verses of our text.
טמא לנפש — Onkelos translates this by דמסאב לטמי נפשא דאנשא. I say that it (the word טמי in this rendering) is an expression in Aramaic for human bones, so that the Targum means: "whosoever is unclean by reason of the bones of a human being''. There are many examples of the use of this word in Genesis Rabbah, as e.g. (Genesis Rabbah 78:1): Hadrian, שחיק טמיא, which means, "Hadrian may his bones be crushed!"

Verse 3

Verse 4

Verse 5

Verse 6

למעל מעל בה׳ [WHEN A MAN OR WOMAN SHALL DO ANY OF THE SINS AGAINST MAN,] TO ACT DECEITFULLY AGAINST THE LORD — Here, you see, Scripture writes down again the section dealing with a person who robs by violence from another, and swears falsely regarding it, — it is the same section that has already been stated in the Sedrah ויקרא (Lev 5:21), "[If a soul sin], and commits a trespass against the Lord, and deny unto his neighbour etc." The reason why it is repeated here is because of two new points which are contained in it. The one is that it (Scripture) writes here, "and if they confess" which teaches that one is not liable to payment of the fifth (in addition to the capital; cf. Leviticus 5:24), nor to bring a guilt offering (cf. Leviticus 5:25) if he is convicted by the evidence of witnesses, but only when he himself confesses the matter (his guilt). The second new point is about something stolen from a proselyte (cf.

Rashi on v. 8) — that it has to be handed over to the priests (cf. Sifrei Bamidbar 2).

Verse 7

את אשמו בראשו [HE SHALL RESTORE] THAT WHEREIN HE IS GUILTY, AS BEING THE CHIEF SUM — This means, he shall restore the principal about which he has sworn falsely (Bava Kamma 110a).
לאשר אשם לו [AND HE SHALL RESTORE THE PRINCIPAL … AND GIVE UNTO HIM] TO WHOM HE IS GUILTY — i.e. unto him to whom he (the claimant) owes money (Ketubot 19a).

Verse 8

ואם אין לאיש גאל BUT IF THE MAN HAS NO KINSMAN — This means that the claimant who put him to the oath, died and has left no heirs,
להשיב האשם אליו TO WHOM THAT WHEREIN HE IS GUILTY COULD BE RESTORED, when he decided at a later period to confess his sin. — Our Rabbis asked (Sifrei Bamidbar 4:1; Bava Kamma 109a): But can you find anyone in Israel who has no kinsman whatsoever, neither a son nor a brother nor other relative near akin to him from his father's family, going back as far as Jacob? But this person referred to is a proselyte who died and has no heirs (his heathen relatives not being entitled to succeed to his property) (Sifrei Bamidbar 4:1; Bava Kamma 109a).
האשם המושב THAT WHEREIN HE IS GUILTY AND WHICH HATH TO BE RESTORED — i.e. the principal (האשם) and the fifth thereof (המושב) (cf. Bava Kamma 110a),
לה' לכהן BELONGS TO THE LORD, FOR THE PRIEST — This means the Lord becomes its owner and gives it to the priest of that Mishmar (shift) (Bava Kamma 109b).
מלבד איל הכפרים BESIDES THE RAM OF EXPIATION which is mentioned in the Sedrah ויקרא (Leviticus 5:25), as being incumbent upon him to offer.

Verse 9

וכל תרומה וגו׳ AND EVERY HEAVE OFFERING … WHICH THEY BRING UNTO THE PRIEST] — R. Ishmael asked, "Do they then have to bring the heave-offering to the priest; does he not have to go around the granaries begging for it? What, then, is the meaning of 'which they bring unto the priest'? It refers to the first fruits of which it is said, (Exodus 23:19) '[The first of the first fruits of thy ground] thou shalt bring into the house of the Lord they God', but I do not know what is to be done with them, (i.e., this is nowhere stated). Scripture therefore states here, '[and every heave-offering, …which they bring] unto the priest, shall be his' — Scripture comes and teaches you with respect to the first fruits that they must be given to the priest" (Sifrei Bamidbar 5).

Verse 10

ואיש את קדשיו לו יהיו AND EVERY MAN'S HOLY THINGS SHALL BE HIS — Because the gifts due to the priests and the Levites are merely mentioned in the Torah (Deuteronomy 18:1—8) (without any statement as to how they are to come into possession of them), therefore one might think they may come and take them by force. On this account, it states here, ''and every man's holy things shall be his" — in some respect — thus it teaches us that the טובת הנאה, the gratification of using them in this respect as he wishes, belongs to the owner. — Many other Halachic rules have they (the Rabbis) deduced about it (this statement) in Sifrei Bamidbar 6:2. — An Agadic explanation of ואיש את קדשיו לו יהיו is the following: Whosoever retains the tithes and does not give them to the Levite, only the tithes

will be his, i.e., his field will ultimately yield no more than a tithe of what it was accustomed to yield (so that his whole possession will not exceed the gifts he should have given to the priests and the Levites; cf. Midrash Tanchuma, Re'eh 10).
איש אשר יתן לכהן, A MAN, HOWEVER, WHO GIVES TO THE PRIEST the gifts that are due to him,
לו יהיה HE SHALL HAVE great riches (Berakhot 63a).

Verse 11

Verse 12

איש איש כי תשטה אשתו IF ANY MAN'S WIFE GO ASIDE [AND ACT DECEITFULLY AGAINST HIM] — What is stated above, immediately before this section? ואיש את קדשיו לו יהיו: If you withhold the gifts due to the priest (cf. Rashi on v. 10), by your life, you will have to come to him in order to bring him your faithless wife for the ordeal by the waters (Berakhot 63a). (The translation therefore is: "A man who remains with his holy things, not giving them to the priest, לו יהיו they — the man and his wife — will become subject to him [require his services])".
איש איש — The double expression איש איש is employed to teach you that she (the faithless wife) deals treacherously in two respects — against Him above Who bears the appelation of איש, as in the text "[the Lord is] a Man of the war" (Exodus 15:3), and against her husband (אישה) here below (Midrash Tanchuma, Vaetchanan 5).
כי תשטה — Our Rabbis have taught (Midrash Tanchuma, Nasso 5): "Adulterers do never sin until a spirit of madness enters into them", as it written, of her כי תשטה "if she becomes mad" (taking תִּשְׁטֶה in the sense of תִּשְׁטֶה, i.e. to become a שׁוֹטֶה, and so, too, of him Scripture writes, (Proverbs 6:32) "Whoso committeth adultery with a woman lacketh understanding". — But the plain sense of the verse is that כי תשטה means: if she deviates from the path of modesty and thereby becomes suspect in his eyes. The word is similar to, (Proverbs 4:15) "turn away (שְׂטֵה) from it, and pass by"; (Proverbs 7:25) "Let not your heart turn (יִשְׂטְ) to her ways".
ומעלה בו מעל AND SHE ACTS UNFAITHFULLY AGAINST HIM — Wherein consists this infidelity? ושכב איש אתה THAT A MAN LIETH WITH HER.

Verse 13

ושכב איש AND A MAN LIETH [WITH HER] — a man, thus excluding a minor and a being that does not come under the term איש (i. e., an animal) (Sifrei Bamidbar 7:2; Sotah 24a).
אתה שכבת זרע [AND A MAN LIETH] WITH HER CARNALLY — This implies: that only her sexual intercourse with another man makes her unfit for continuing in marital relation with her husband, but the fact that her sister had sexual intercourse with him does not make her unfit for such (Yevamot 95a) [as was once the case with two sisters who greatly resembled each other (Tanchuma 5:2:6)]
ונעלם מעיני אשה AND IT BE HID FROM THE EYES OF HER HUSBAND — Since it speaks of the eyes of the husband, it excludes the case of a blind man (i.e., a blind man cannot subject his wife to the ordeal). On the other hand, it states: "if it be concealed from his eyes"; it follows therefore that if he sees her improper conduct and wilfully closes his eyes to it the waters cannot try her (i.e., she cannot be subjected to the ordeal) (Sifrei Bamidbar 7:3; Sotah 27a).
ונסתרה AND SHE WAS ASIDE SECRETLY with him such a period of time wherein there was a possibility for her to become defiled by intercourse (Sotah 4a).

ועד אין בה AND THERE BE NO WITNESS AGAINST HER — But if there was even only one witness against her who stated that she was defiled she did not drink the מים המאררים, but was henceforth forbidden to her husband (Sotah 2b).
ועד אין בה AND THERE WAS NO WITNESS AGAINST HER, as regards defilement, but there were witnesses regarding her meeting with the man privily.
ונתפשה [AND SHE WAS NOT] SEIZED — i.e. subjected to force (Sifrei Bamidbar 7:3). Similar is, (Deuteronomy 22:28) "And seizes her (ותפשה) and lieth with her".

Verse 14

ועבר עליו AND [THE SPIRIT OF JEALOUSY] COME UPON HIM — i.e., had come upon him before her seclusion with the man.
רוח קנאה וקנא [AND] THE SPIRIT OF JEALOUSY [COME UPON HIM] וקנא — Our Rabbis said that it is an expression denoting warning — that he warns her: do not be aside privily with that man (Sotah 3a.)
והוא נטמאה או עבר עליו וגו׳ AND SHE BE DEFILED, OR IF [THE SPIRIT OF JEALOUSY] COME UPON HIM [AND SHE WAS NOT DEFILED] — that is to say, he warned her but she disregarded his warning, and it is uncertain whether she has been defiled or not (Sifrei Bamidbar 8).

Verse 15

מנחה implies that it shall not be of fine sifted flour.
It must be שערים BARLEY, and not wheat; because she committed a bestial act, therefore shall her offering consist of that which is food for beasts (Sifrei Bamidbar 8; Sotah 14a).
לא יצק עליו שמן HE SHALL POUR NO OIL UPON IT, so that her offering shall not be embellished (cf. Rashi on Leviticus 5:11) — and also because oil is called light (it is named יצהר from the root צהר, to give light; see Tanchuma) whilst she acted in darkness (Midrash Tanchuma, Nasso 3; cf. Sotah 15a).
ולא יתן עליו לבנה NOR SHALL HE PUT FRANKINCENSE THEREON — Because the matriarchs are symbolically termed frankincense, as it is said, (Songs 4:6) "I will get me … to the hill of frankincense" (which is taken as an allusion to the matriarchs), whilst she deviated from their paths (Midrash Tanchuma, Nasso 3).
כי מנחת קנאת הוא FOR IT IS A MEAL OFFERING OF JEALOUSY — i.e., this מנחה is a meal offering of jealousy; for the word מנחה is masculine and is therefore referred to by the masc. form.
מנחת קנאת A MEAL OFFERING OF JEALOUSY — The plural קנאות is used because it arouses against her two outbreaks of jealousy — the jealousy of the Omnipresent and the jealousy of her husband (Tosefta Sotah 2; Sifrei Bamidbar 8; cf. Rashi's second comment on איש איש v. 12).

Verse 16

Verse 17

מים קדשים HOLY WATER — i.e., water that has become holy through being in the laver. — The water was taken from the laver because that was made of the copper mirrors of the women who had gathered (Exodus 38:8) [at the entrance to the Tent of Meeting] and this woman deviated from their chaste ways. Because they had cherished their husbands' love in Egypt (cf. Rashi on Exodus 38:8), while this woman depravedly gave herself over to another, she was to be examined through it (Bamidbar Rabbah 9 :14).

בכלי חרש IN AN EARTHEN VESSEL — She gave the adulterer excellent wine to drink in valuable goblets, therefore she shall drink the bitter water in a common earthenware cup. (Sotah 9a.)

Verse 18

והעמיד הכהן וגו׳ AND THE PRIEST SHALL PRESENT [THE WOMAN BEFORE THE LORD] — But has it not already been stated, (v. 16) "and he shall present her before the Lord"? But they used to move her about from place to place (and thus, as it were, present her many times) in order to wear her out so that her thoughts should become confused and she be unable to invent explanations of her conduct and so she would confess her guilt (Sotah 8a).
ופרע AND HE SHALL PUT IN DISORDER [THE WOMAN'S HAIR] — i.e. he pulls away her hair-plaits in order to make her look despicable. — We may learn from this that as regards married Jewish women an uncovered head is a disgrace to them (Sifrei Bamidbar 11).
לפני ה׳ [AND THE PRIEST SHALL PRESENT THE WOMAN] BEFORE THE LORD — i.e. in the gateway of Nicanor (cf. Rashi on Leviticus 14:11 and Note thereon) which was the eastern gate of the court, the passage for all who entered the court [and where she was therefore most exposed to public view] (Sotah 7a).
ונתן על כפיה AND HE SHALL PUT [THE MEAL-OFFERING OF MEMORIAL] IN HER HANDS — to wear her out even more (cf. Rashi on the beginning of the verse); — perhaps her thoughts would become confused now, so that she would confess her guilt and it would become unnecessary to blot out from the parchment the Divine Proper Name by the water (cf. Sifrei Bamidbar 11; Sotah 14a).
המרים THE BITTER [WATERS] — They were called bitter waters because of their final effect, viz., that they proved bitter for her (Sifrei Bamidbar 11; Sotah 20a).
המאררים means, the waters that make her disappear (pine away) from the world. It has the same meaning as, (Ezekiel. 28:24): "a removing (ממאיר) brier" (one that removed some of the flesh). It would not be correct to explain מים המאררים as מים ארורים, "cursed waters" for actually they are holy (cf. v. 17). Besides, even if the meaning has anything to do with "cursing", Scripture does not write ארורים, "waters that are cursed", but מאררים — "that bring a curse to others"; and Onkelos, too, does not render it by ליטיא — "cursed waters" but by מלטטיא — "waters that show a curse on the body of this woman".

Verse 19

והשביע אתה וגו׳ AND [THE PRIEST] SHALL ADJURE HER etc. — and wherein does this adjuration consist? In that he says to the woman, "if no man hath lain with thee … הנקי, be thou free", which implies: "if, however, a man hath lain with thee, חנקי, thou deservest to be suffocated", because from a negative statement you may deduce its converse, the positive statement. It is true that in an adjuration it would be more appropriate to make this threat of punishment if guilty, and to allow the converse to be derived from it, but here it mentions first what will happen if she has not sinned, since it intends to suggest that it is a duty in capital cases to begin the proceedings with the statement of something that bears upon the innocence of the accused (Sotah 17a; Shevuot 36a; Sanhedrin 33a).

Verse 20

ואת כי שטית BUT IF THOU HAST BUT IF THOU HAST GONE ASIDE ASIDE — The word כי must here be employed in the meaning of "if" (cf. Rashi on Genesis 18:15).

Verse 21

בשבעת האלה [AND THE PRIEST SHALL ADJURE THE WOMAN] WITH AN ADJURATION OF CURSING — i.e., an oath which contains the curse.
יתן ה' אותך לאלה THE LORD MAKE THEE AN EXECRATION — i.e. that everybody will curse through thee (i.e., by mention of thy name), saying, "May misfortune come upon you just as it came upon Mrs. so-and-so!"
ולשבעה [THE LORD MAKE THEE AN EXECRATION] AND AN OATH — This means, that everybody will swear through thee (i.e., by mention of thy name) — "If not (i.e., if I am not speaking the truth) may misfortune happen to me just as it happened to Mrs. So-and-so!" In a similar sense it states, (Isaiah 65:15) "and ye shall leave your name as an oath unto my chosen" which means that the righteous take an oath by mention of the punishment that came upon evil-doers. So, too, in reference to the blessing, does it state, (Genesis 12:3) "and through thee (i.e., by mention of thy name) shall bless themselves [all the families of the earth]"; (Genesis 48:20) "By thee shall Israel bless, saying, [God make thee as Ephraim and as Manasseh]" (Sifrei Bamidbar 14).
את ירכך [WHEN THE LORD DOTH MAKE] THY THIGH [TO FALL, AND THY BELLY TO SWELL] — In uttering the curse that will befall her because of her sin he mentions the thigh before the belly (whilst in v. 22 the belly is stated to be affected first), because with it (the thigh) she began to sin (cf. Sotah 8b, 9b).
צבה — Understand this as the Targum does: SWOLLEN.

Verse 22

לצבות בטן is the same as לְהַצְבוֹת בטן (the verb being the Hiphil infinitive). This is the usage of the Patach: that the "lamed" has it as its vowel instead of the ה having it (viz., that it is a contraction of לה). Similar is (Exodus 13:21) לַרְאֹתכם הדרך and (Deuteronomy 1:33) לָנְחֹתָם בדרך אשר הלכו בה (which are equivalent to לְהַרְאֹתְכֶם and לְהַנְחֹתָם). And so, too, in this verse, לָנֶפֶל ירך, which is the same as לְהַנְפִּיל ירך. The meaning is: that the waters cause the belly to swell, and cause the thigh to fall.
לצבות בטן ולנפל ירך [AND THIS WATER THAT CAUSETH THE CURSE SHALL GO INTO THY BOWELS] TO MAKE THE BELLY TO SWELL AND THE THIGH TO WASTE — i.e. the belly and the thigh of the adulterer (Note that Scripture does not state here, as in the preceding verse, "thy thigh", "thy belly"). Or perhaps this is not so, but it means those of the adulteress? But when it states, (v. 21) "[when the Lord doth make] thy thigh to waste and thy belly to swell", you see, that those of the adulteress are mentioned already (Sotah 28a; cf. Sifrei Bamidbar 15:1).
אמן אמן [AND THE WOMAN SHALL SAY] AMEN, AMEN — The utterance of the word אמן by a person implies the acceptance of an oath which has been recited by another with reference to him. — The two words אמן (which may mean "It is so", or, "May it be so") respectively signify, "Amen" with reference to the curse invoked, and "Amen" with reference to the oath recited. Accordingly she declares: "Amen" ("may it be so" i. e., may the אלה "the curse" befall me) if I have received defilement from this man, and "Amen" if I have received defilement from any other man; "Amen" ("It is so" — the terms of the oath are true) that I have not gone astray either when I was betrothed to my husband or since I have been married to him; (or in the case of a woman who has married her deceased husband's brother; cf. Deuteronomy 25:7, it implies), "either when I was awaiting marriage with my brother-in-law or after I was married to him" (Sotah 18a).

Verse 23

Verse 24

והשקה את האשה AND HE SHALL CAUSE THE WOMAN TO DRINK [THE BITTER WATER] — This was not the actual order of the proceedings, because really he offered her meal-offering first (before giving her the water to drink; cf. v. 26, 27), but Scripture here merely informs you that when he afterwards gives her the water to drink it will become bitter in her belly (cf. Sotah 19a). — Since only the thigh and the belly are mentioned (vv. 21. 22), I might conclude that only these are affected (see Sifrei Bamidbar 18); whence do we know that this applies also to the rest of the body? Because Scripture states here, "[and the water … shall come] into her [and become bitter]" — into all of her body! But if so, why does Scripture explicitly mention only the thigh and the belly? Because they (these two) were the first to begin the sin, therefore it (Scripture) makes the punishment begin with them (and for this reason Scripture mentions them explicitly, but, as a matter of fact, it extends to the whole body as is implied in the word בה (Sifrei Bamidbar 18).
למרים (The text is more lit., "and the waters shall enter into her as bitter") — i.e. to become bad and bitter for her.

Verse 25

והניף THEN [THE PRIEST] SHALL WAVE [THE MEAL-OFFERING] — He moves it about horizontally and vertically, and she, too, waves it together with him, because her hand has to be above the hand of the priest (Sotah 19a).
והקריב אתה — This refers to what is known as the הגשה — bringing it to the south-west corner of the altar before the קמיצה, "the taking off of the handful of flour", just as is the case with all other meal-offerings (cf. Rashi on Leviticus 7:7 and Sotah 14b).

Verse 26

אזכרתה THE MEMORIAL PART THEREOF — i.e. the handful, and it is so called because through its being burnt the meal-offering is brought to remembrance before the Most High God (Sifrei Bamidbar 17; cf. Rashi on Leviticus 2:2 and 24:7).

Verse 27

והשקה את המים AND HE SHALL MAKE HER DRINK THE WATER — This statement made after Scripture has just said (v. 26) "and afterwards he shall make the woman drink the waters" (see Siphre) is intended to include the case that if she says, "I will not drink" after the scroll on which the Holy Name was written had been blotted out, they pour it into her and make her drink the water against her will — except if she adds: "I have been defiled" [when, of course, no further test is necessary] (Sotah 19b).
וצבתה בטנה AND HER BELLY SHALL SWELL, [AND HER THIGH SHALL WASTE] — Although when uttering the curse (v. 21) he (the priest) mentioned the thigh first, for the reason given by Rashi in his comment there, the water tested her (i.e., affected her) only according to the manner it passed into her body (i.e., it affected the belly first since it first entered that part of her body and then the thigh) (Sotah 9b).
והיתה האשה לאלה AND THE WOMAN SHALL BE AN EXECRATION — This means, as I have already explained (v. 21), that everyone shall curse by mention of her name.

בקרב עמה [AND THE WOMAN SHALL BE AN EXECRATION] AMONG HER PEOPLE — This is stressed: "among her people" — because there is a difference between a person who is brought to disgrace in a place where he is well known and a person who is brought to disgrace in a place where he is unknown.

Verse 28

ואם לא נטמאה האשה AND IF THE WOMAN WAS NOT DEFILED on the occasion of this secluding herself with this man,
וטהרה הוא AND BE CLEAN (guiltless) as regards any other place,
ונקתה THEN SHE SHALL BE FREE from the effect of the water that waste the body and not only this, but ונזרעה זרע SHE SHALL CONCEIVE SEED — i.e. if until now she used to bear children in pain, she will from now bear with ease (free from pain), if up to now she used to bear black (ugly) children, from now on she will bear white (beautiful) children (Sifrei Bamidbar 19; Sotah 26a).

Verse 29

Verse 30

או איש — The word או here has the same meaning as in the phrase (Exodus 21:36): או נודע, "If it be known" (cf. Rashi on that verse and our Note thereon) — that is to say: if the man is a jealous man, then just on account of this, he shall present the woman [before the Lord and then the priest shall execute upon her all this law]."

Verse 31

ונקה האיש מעון THEN SHALL THE MAN BE GUILTLESS FROM INIQUITY — This means, if the waters try her (have effect on her), he should not worry and say: "I have incurred guilt through her death!" — No, he is free from punishment. Another explanation is: As soon as he has made her drink the water and she is proved innocent she may lawfully remain with him as his wife, and he is free from sin in permitting this, but if he lives with her before this, he is not free, for a סוטה (a wife suspected of infidelity) is forbidden to her husband pending her trial (cf. Sifrei Bamidbar 21).

Chapter 6

Verse 1

Verse 2

כי יפלא means, IF HE CLEARLY UTTERS (cf. Rashi on Leviticus 22:21 and Note thereon). — Why is the section dealing with the Nazarite placed in juxtaposition to the section dealing with the סוטה? To tell you that he who has once seen a סוטה in her disgrace should abstain from wine, because it may lead to adultery (Sotah 2a).
נדר נזיר — The term נזר wherever it occurs denotes "keeping aloof from something" (cf. Rashi on Leviticus 22:2). Here, too, it means that he keeps away from wine (Sifrei Bamidbar 22).

להזיר לה׳ means, TO KEEP HIMSELF ALOOF from wine FOR THE SAKE OF HEAVEN (God).

Verse 3

מיין ושכר — Understand this as the Targum does: he shall abstain from new (יין) and old wine (שכר). The latter is called שכר, "intoxicating drink", because wine makes one intoxicated when it is old.
וכל משרת — The word משרת denotes "steeping" in water or any other liquid. In the Mishnaic language there are many examples of this, e.g., (Shabbat 17b): "One must not soak (שורין) ink-materials and dyes in water on the eve of Sabbath"; (Nazir 34b): "A Nazarite who steeped (שרה) his bread in wine".

Verse 4

חרצנים are THE KERNELS....
זג are THE HUSKS (skins) outside. They are called זג (a term also used for a bell) because the kernels are inside them as the clapper is in the bell (cf. Siphre; Nazir 34b; 39a).

Verse 5

קדש יהיה means HOLY SHALL IT (not "he") BE viz., his hair shall be holy. inasmuch as he must let grow freely the hair of his head (lit., so as to let grow the over-growth, פרע, of the hair of his head) (Sifrei Bamidbar 25; Taanit 4a).
פרע — The word פרע is punctuated (as to its first syllable) with Patach-Katan (Segol) because it is in construct state to שער ראשו and the meaning is: the פרע, the wild growth of שער ראשו — The meaning of the word פרע is over-growth of the hair; similar is (Leviticus 21:10) "He shall not let his hair grow wild (יפרע)". Growth of the hair of less than thirty days' duration does not come under the term פרע (Sifrei Bamidbar 25; Sanhedrin 22b).

Verse 6

Verse 7

Verse 8

כל ימי נזרו קדש הוא ALL THE DAYS OF HIS NAZARITESHIP HE IS HOLY — This refers to the holiness of his body which consists in his abstaining from defiling himself by reason of a corpse (Sifrei Bamidbar 27).

Verse 9

בפתע — This refers to a Nazarite who defiles himself thus by accident.
פתאם — This refers to one who does so inadvertently (Sifrei Bamidbar 28:1; cf. Onkelos). — But there are some who say that פתע פתאום denotes one thing, viz., an occurrence of suddenness (by a sudden occurrence, suddenly).
וכי ימות מת עליו AND IF A MAN DIES עליו — i.e., in the tent where he (the נזיר) happens to be.
ביום טהרתו [THEN HE SHALL CLIP THE HAIR OF HIS HEAD] IN THE DAY OF HIS CLEANSING — i.e., on the day when he is being sprinkled with the מי חטאת,

(the water containing the ashes of the Red Heifer; cf. Numbers 19:17). Or perhaps this is not so, but it means, on the eighth day when he is perfectly clean! It, however, continues: "on the seventh day [he shall clip it]". But if it had written only "on the seventh day [he shall clip it]" I might have thought that he must clip his hair even if one had not sprinkled him for some reason or other! Scripture therefore also states "on the day of his cleansing [he shall clip the hair of his head]" (Sifrei Bamidbar 28:2).

Verse 10

וביום השמיני יבא שתי תרים AND ON THE EIGHTH DAY HE SHALL BRING TWO TURTLES — On the eighth day, thus excluding the seventh. Or perhaps this is not so, but it is intended to exclude the ninth day (i.e., that the offering must not be brought later than the eighth day)? But Scripture has fixed a date for the animals which are to be offered (cf. Leviticus 22:27), and has also fixed a date for the persons who bring offerings (Exodus 22:29). How is it in the case of the animals offered as sacrifices? It declared the eighth day and any time from the eighth onward as fit for offering them! So, too, in the case of persons offering sacrifices "the eighth day" implies the eighth and any day from the eighth onwards and only excludes the seventh or any earlier day (Sifrei Bamidbar 29:1).

Verse 11

מאשר חטא על הנפש [AND THE PRIEST … MAKE EXPIATION FOR HIM] FOR THAT HE HATH SINNED BY THE DEAD — i.e., that he has not been on his guard against defilement by a corpse. — R. Eleazer ha-Kappar said, "his sin consists in that he has afflicted himself by abstaining from the enjoyment of wine (Sifrei Bamidbar 30; Nazir 19a).
וקדש את ראשו AND HE SHALL HALLOW HIS HEAD [THAT SAME DAY] by beginning again the counting of his Nazaritehood (i.e., he resumes his Nazaritehood).

Verse 12

והדר לה את ימי נזרו' AND HE SHALL CONSECRATE IN HONOUR OF THE LORD THE DAYS OF HIS NAZARITEHOOD — i.e., he shall again count the days of his Nazaritehood as though for the first time (i.e., he must begin the counting of the period of his Nazaritehood from the first day, not resume it at the point where it was broken off).
והימים הראשנים יפלו AND THE DAYS THAT WERE BEFORE SHALL BE LOST — i.e. shall not come into account.

Verse 13

יביא אתו means, he shall bring himself. This (the word אתו) is one of the three cases of את with a pronominal suffix which R. Ishmael explained thus (as being reflexive and not accusative pronouns). Similar to it is (Leviticus 22:16): והשאיו אותם עון אשמה "and they will bring אותם the iniquity of trespass", i.e., "and they will bring upon themselves". Similar to it is, (Deuteronomy 34:6) ויקבר אתו בני "He (Moses) buried himself in the glen", (Sifrei Bamidbar 32; cf. Rashi on Leviticus 22:16 and Note thereon).

Verse 14

Verse 15

ומנחתם ונסכיהם AND THEIR MEAL-OFFERING AND THEIR DRINK-OFFERINGS — i.e., those of the burnt-offering and the feast-offerings (mentioned in v. 14; no חטאת except that of a leper requires נסכים). Because these (the עולה and the שלמים of the Nazir) are included in (come under) the general rule governing עולה and שלמים and have here been excepted to become subject to a new matter, viz., that they require an offering of bread together with them. Scripture restores them to the general rule by expressly stating that they require drink-offerings (and meal-offerings) as is the law of עולה and שלמים in general (Sifrei Bamidbar 34).
חלות מצות ורקיקי מצות (the word מצות must be connected with חלות too) PIERCED CAKES UNLEAVENED AND WAFERS OF UNLEAVENED BREAD — ten of each kind (Menachot 77b).

Verse 16

Verse 17

זבח שלמים לה' על סל המצות [AND HE SHALL OFFER THE RAM] FOR A SACRIFICE OF A FEAST-OFFERING UNTO THE LORD, WITH THE BASKET OF UNLEAVENED BREAD — i.e., he shall slaughter the feast-offerings with the intention of sanctifying the bread by this very act (cf. Menachot 46b).
את מנחתו ואת נסכו [THE PRIEST SHALL ALSO OFFER] ITS MEAL-OFFERING AND ITS DRINK-OFFERING — those of the ram.

Verse 18

וגלח הנזיר פתח אהל מועד AND THE NAZARITE SHALL CLIP [THE HAIR OF THE HEAD OF HIS NAZARITEHOOD] AT THE ENTRANCE OF THE APPOINTED TENT — One might think that he must cut his hair in the forecourt (for it states at the entrance of the appointed tent)! Surely, this would be treating the forecourt in a contemptuous manner! But the meaning is: the Nazarite shall cut his hair after the feast-offerings had been slaughtered of which Scripture writes, (Leviticus 3:2) "and he shall slaughter it פתח אהל מועד" (cf. Sifrei Bamidbar 35; Nazir 45a).
אשר תחת זבח השלמים [AND HE SHALL TAKE THE HAIR … AND PUT IT IN THE FIRE] WHICH IS UNDER THE SACRIFICE OF THE FEAST-OFFERINGS — i.e., under the pot in which he boils it (the שלמים); because the feast offerings of the Nazarite were boiled in the forecourt since the priest had to take "the shoulder" after it had been boiled (cf. vv. 19 and 20) and to wave it before the Lord (cf. Nazir 45b).

Verse 19

הזרע בשלה [AND THE PRIEST SHALL TAKE] THE SHOULDER בשלה — i.e. after it has been boiled.

Verse 20

קדש הוא לכהן IT IS HOLY FOR THE PRIEST — The cake, the wafer and the shoulder are a heave-offering for the priest.
על חזה התנופה means: BESIDES THE BREAST AND THE SHOULDER which are due to him (the priest) from all feast-offerings, there is to be added to the portions assigned to the priest in the case of the Nazarite's feast-offerings, this shoulder. Because the feast-offerings of the Nazarite are included in the general rule governing feast-offerings but were excepted to become subject to a new matter — the setting apart of the shoulder for

the priest — it became necessary to restore them to the general rule of שלמים by expressly stating that they are subjected also to the setting apart of the breast and thigh as are שלמים in general (Sifrei Bamidbar 37).

Verse 21

מלבד אשר תשיג ידו [THIS IS THE LAW OF THE NAZARITE WHO HATH VOWED, AND OF HIS OFFERING UNTO THE LORD …] BESIDES THAT WHICH HIS HAND SHALL GET — This implies that if he vowed: "Behold, I take upon myself to become a Nazir under the condition that I shall cut my hair (i.e. that I shall make the final ceremony) in connection with the offering of a hundred burnt offerings and a hundred feast offerings" (whilst really there is prescribed a single offering of each kind) — then כפי נדרו אשר ידור כן יעשה ACCORDING TO THE VOW WHICH HE HATH VOWED MUST HE DO, but "in addition to (על) what is prescribed in the usual law of the Nazarite". In addition to it, but not omitting any of it — so that if he vowed: "Behold, I take upon myself to become a Nazir five times under the condition to cut my hair (i.e. to make the final ceremony once) in connection with the offering of only these three animals (i. e. one עולה, one שלמים and one חטאת, whilst after the elapse of each term an עולה and a שלמים offering are due), I do not read with reference to him (i.e. I do not apply to him the words): "According to the vow which he vowed, so must he do" [— but he must bring each of the offerings five times as prescribed] (Sifrei Bamidbar 38).

Verse 22

Verse 23

אמור is infinitive. Similar forms are זכור (Exodus 20:8), שמור (Deuteronomy 5:12); in O. F. disant, (English = saying).
אמור להם SAYING UNTO THEM — so that all of them should hear the blessing (it would not suffice to pronounce the blessings upon the Israelites in their absence; cf. Sifrei Bamidbar 39).
אמור is written plene (with ו after the מ) thus indicating: ye shall not bless them hurriedly and hastily, but devoutly and with a whole heart (Midrash Tanchuma, Nasso 10).

Verse 24

יברכך [THE LORD] BLESS THEE — that thy property may increase (Sifrei Bamidbar 40).
וישמרך AND MAY HE GUARD THEE — that no robbers come upon thee to take away thy property. For a human being who gives a present to his servant cannot guard him against everybody, and if a band of robbers attack him and take it away, what pleasure can he, then, derive from this present?! The Holy One, blessed be He, however, both gives and guards — against everybody (Midrash Tanchuma, Nasso 10). Many Midrashic interpretations are given of this verse in the Sifrei (Sifrei Bamidbar 40).

Verse 25

יאר ה' פניו אליך THE LORD MAKE HIS FACE SHINE UPON THEE — i.e. May He show thee a friendly (more lit., smiling) countenance — a beaming countenance.
ויחנך means, May He grant thee good favour (חן) (Sifrei Bamidbar 41).

Verse 26

ישא ה' פניו אליך THE LORD LIFT UP HIS COUNTENANCE UPON THEE — This expresses the idea: May He suppress His anger (Numbers Rabbah 11:7)).

Verse 27

ושמו את שמי AND THEY SHALL PUT MY NAME [UPON THE CHILDREN OF ISRAEL] — i.e. they shall bless them by the Proper Name of God (i. e. when uttering the blessings they shall use the Tetragrammaton and no substitute for it) (Sifrei Bamidbar 43).
ואני אברכם AND I WILL BLESS THEM — i.e. I will bless the Israelites: I will give My approval to the priests' blessings (lit., I will agree with the priests). — Another explanation of "And I will bless them" is: "And I will bless the priests (Chullin 49a).

Chapter 7

Verse 1

ויהי ביום כלות משה AND IT CAME TO PASS ON THE DAY THAT MOSES HAD FINISHED [RAISING THE TABERNACLE] — The word כלות is written defective (without ו after the ל) thus indicating: on the day that the Tabernacle was erected Israel was like a bride (כלה) who goes beneath the marriage canopy (Midrash Tanchuma, Nasso 20). (Cf. Rashi on Exodus 31:18.)
כלות משה MOSES HAD FINISHED — Bezalel and Ohaliab and all the wise-hearted men made the Tabernacle (cf. Exodus 36:1), but Scripture attributes it to Moses (describes it as his work), because he devoted himself wholeheartedly to it, to see that the shape of each article was exactly as He had shewn him on the mountain — to show the workmen how it should be made; nor did he err in a single shape. — A similar thing do we find in the case of David: because he devoted himself to the building of the Holy Temple, — as it is said, (Psalms 132:1—5) "Lord, remember David, and all his affliction: How he swore unto the Lord … [I will not give sleep to mine eyes … until I find out a place for the Lord …]", therefore it is called by his name, as it is said, (1 Kings 12:16) "Now see your own house, David" (Midrash Tanchuma, Nasso 13).
כלות משה להקים [AND IT CAME TO PASS ON THE DAY] THAT MOSES HAD FINISHED SETTING UP [THE TABERNACLE] — but it is not said, "on the day Moses set up"; this (the phrase כלות … להקים, "had finished setting up") teaches us that during each of the seven days of installation Moses used to erect and dismantle it (the Tabernacle), but on that day (the eighth) he erected it but did not again dismantle it; for this reason it is said: "on the day that (Moses) finished setting up" — i.e. on that day his several erections of it came to an end. — It was the New Moon (the first day) of Nisan (cf. Rashi on Leviticus 9:1 and Note thereon), on the second the Red Heifer was burnt, on the third they (the Levites) were sprinkled for the first time with the water in which its ashes were mingled (cf. Rashi on 8:7), and on the seventh day, after having been again sprinkled, they shaved their bodies and were ready to enter on their duties (cf. 8:6—7) (Sifrei Bamidbar 44).

Verse 2

הם נשיאי המטת THESE ARE THE LEADERS OF THE TRIBES — They were the officers [appointed] over them in Egypt, and they were beaten on account of them, as it says (Exodus 5:14),"The officers of the children of Israel were beaten" (Sifrei Bamidbar 45).

הם העמדים על הפקדים THEY WHO STOOD OVER THE COUNTING — They stood with Moses and Aaron when they counted the Israelites, as it says,"With you [Moses and Aaron] there shall be [a man from each tribe]" (Numbers 1:4).

Verse 3

שש עגלת צב SIX COVERED WAGGONS — The word צב means "covered over". Similar is, (Isaiah 66:20) "(And they shall bring all your brethren …] in covered wagons (בצבים) and upon mules", where covered wagons are called צבים without the addition of a word denoting "wagons" (Sifrei Bamidbar 46 1).
ויקרבו אותם לפני המשכן AND THEY BROUGHT THEM BEFORE THE TABERNACLE — because Moses would not accept them (the gifts) at their (the princes') hands until he was so bidden by the mouth of the Omnipresent (cf. v. 5). — Rabbi Nathan said: What reason had the princes to give their contributions here first of all the people, whereas at the work of the Tabernacle they were not the first but the last to contribute? But — he replied — the princes spoke thus: "Let the community in general contribute all they wish to give and then what will then be lacking we shall supply". As soon as they saw that the community gave everything needed in its entirety (lit., that the community completed everything) — as it said, (Exodus 36:7) "For the stuff they had was enough [for all the work to make it]" — the princes asked, 'What can we now do'? Therefore they brought the onyx stones, and stones for setting for the Ephod and for the breast plate. That is why they were here the first to contribute" (Sifrei Bamidbar 45 1).

Verse 4

Verse 5

Verse 6

Verse 7

כפי עבדתם [TWO WAGGONS AND FOUR OXEN HE GAVE UNTO THE SONS OF GERSHON,] ACCORDING TO THEIR SERVICE — only two wagons and four oxen, whilst the sons of Merari were given twice as many, because the burden of the sons of Gershon was lighter than that of the sons of Merari since they carried the boards, the columns and the sockets.

Verse 8

Verse 9

כי עבדת הקדש עלהם [BUT TO THE SONS OF KOHATH HE GAVE NONE (NO WAGGONS)] BECAUSE THE עבדת הקדש BELONGS UNTO THEM — (not the service of the Sanctuary devolved upon them, but the service in connection with) carrying the most holy objects: the ark, the table, etc. was incumbent upon them, therefore בכתף ישאו they should carry upon their shoulders (not in wagons).

Verse 10

ויקריבו הנשאים את חנכת המזבח AND THE PRINCES OFFERED FOR DEDICATING THE ALTAR — After they had presented the waggons and the oxen for carrying the Tabernacle, their heart prompted them to present offerings for the altar, in order to dedicate it (Here, ויקריבו denotes: they offered sacrifice).
ויקריבו הנשיאם את קרבנם לפני המזבח AND THE PRINCES BROUGHT THEIR OFFERING BEFORE THE ALTAR, because Moses would not accept them at their hands until he was so bidden by the mouth of the Almighty (Sifrei Bamidbar 47).

Verse 11

יקריבו את קרבנם לחנכת המזבח THEY SHALL OFFER THEIR OFFERING, [EACH PRINCE ON HIS DAY] FOR THE DEDICATING OF THE ALTAR — but Moses did not yet know how they were to bring their offerings — whether according to the order of their birth (i.e. according to the order in which the sons of Jacob after whom the tribes were named were born, in which case the prince of the tribe of Reuben would have offered first), or according to the order in which they moved off on the journeys, (when Judah would be the first), until he was told by the mouth of the Holy One, blessed be He: "according to the order on the journeys shall they offer" — yet each prince on his day (and not three together as they actually journeyed) (cf. Sifrei Bamidbar 47).

Verse 12

ביום הראשון ON THE FIRST DAY — That day received ten crowns (was distinguished in ten different ways): it was the same day as was the first day of Creation, the first day on which the princes offered etc., as it is set forth in Seder Olam 7 (cf. Rashi on Leviticus 9:1 and Note 2 thereon).
למטה יהודה [NACHSHON THE SON OF AMINADAB,] OF THE TRIBE OF JUDAH — By these words Scripture merely states his genealogy after his tribe, and they do not mean that he collected the offerings from his tribe and offered them on their behalf. Or perhaps it does state למטה יהודה only to intimate that he collected the offerings from his tribe and then brought them? Scripture, however, states, (v. 17): this was the offering of Nachshon — he brought it of that which was his own (Sifrei Bamidbar 48).

Verse 13

שניהם מלאים סלת BOTH OF THEM WERE FULL OF FINE FLOUR — for a free-will meal-offering.

Verse 14

עשרה זהב — Understand this as the Targum does: there was in it (it contained) the weight of ten shekels of the Sanctuary.
מלאה קטרת FULL OF FRANKINCENSE — We do not find frankincense prescribed as an offering for an individual, nor to have been offered on the outer altar except this one alone; this offering of frankincense by the princes was therefore an הוראת שעה, a temporary measure (Menachot 50b).

Verse 15

פר אחד ONE BULLOCK — i.e. that which is unique (מיוחד) in the herd (cf. Sifrei Bamidbar 50).

Verse 16

שעיר עזים אחד לחטאת ONE KID OF THE GOATS FOR A SIN-OFFERING, to make expiation for uncleanness caused by a grave in the depths of the earth, (i.e. one that is not known to exist and it might therefore be assumed that people passed over it and thereby unwittingly became unclean), which was only a doubtful uncleanness (one about which there exists a doubt as to whether it actually has been incurred or not) (cf. Sifrei Bamidbar 51).

Verse 17

Verse 18

הקריב נתנאל בן צוער... הקרב את קרבנו NETANEL BROUGHT HIS OFFERING...HE BROUGHT HIS OFFERING: Why is the word הִקְרִיב, "brought [his offering]," used in connection with the tribe of Issachar, but is not used in connection with any of the [other] tribes? Because [the tribe of] Reuben came and complained, "Is it not enough that my brother Judah has preceded me? Let me [at least] offer up after him." Moses said to him,"I was told by the Almighty that they should offer up in the order in which they travel, according to their divisions." This is why it says: הַקְרֵב אֶת קָרְבָּנוֹ, [in which the word הַקְרֵב is] missing a"yud," [thus] giving it the meaning of הַקְרֵב, in the imperative for he was commanded by the Almighty,"Bring the offering!" What is the meaning of הַקְרֵב … הִקְרִיב, twice? For because of two reasons he [Issachar] merited to be the second of the tribes to offer their sacrifices: One, because they were [well] versed in the Torah, as it says,"And of the sons of Issachar, those who had understanding of the times" (I Chron. 12:32). Another, because they advised the princes to contribute these offerings (Sifrei Bamidbar 53). In the treatise of Rabbi Moses Hadarshan ["the preacher"], I found [the following]: Rabbi Pinchas the son of Yair says [that] Netanel the son of Zu'ar gave them this idea.

Verse 19

קערת כסף — The numerical value of its letters (of the letters of these two words) is 930 corresponding to the years of Adam ha-Rishon (Numbers Rabbah 14:12).
שלשים ומאה משקלה THE WEIGHT THEREOF WAS AN HUNDRED AND THIRTY SHEKELS — in allusion to the fact that when he (Adam) first raised children to maintain the world in existence he was 130 years old, for it is said, (Genesis 5:3) "and Adam lived a hundred and thirty years and then begat [a son]" (Numbers Rabbah 14:12).
מזרק אחד כסף — The numerical value of these words is 520, being an allusion to Noah who begot children at the age of 500 and also an allusion to the twenty years before his offspring were born when the decree regarding the flood was made (thus together 520 years) — just as I have set forth in my comment upon the verse (Genesis 6:3): "yet his days shall be 120 years". — It is for this reason that it is here said, מזרק אחד כסף and it is not said, מזרק כסף אחד, the number being placed at the end of the phrase, as it is said of the charger (קערת כסף אחת), — to indicate that the letters of the word אחד, too, should be taken into account in this reckoning (Numbers Rabbah 14:12).
שבעים שקל SEVENTY SHEKELS — corresponding to the seventy nations that descended from his (Noah's) sons (Numbers Rabbah 14:12).

Verse 20

כף אחת (כף also denotes "hand") — in allusion to the Torah that was given from the hand of the Holy One, blessed be He (Numbers Rabbah 13:16).
עשרה זהב — TEN SHEKELS, GOLD — corresponding to the Ten Commandments (Numbers Rabbah 13:16).
מלאה קטרת — The total of the word קטרת according to their numerical value is 613, the number of the Biblical commandments, except that you must exchange the ק"ף by ת"ד, according to the "Method of Permutation" known as א״ת ב"ש ג"ר ד"ק (by which the first letter of the Alphabet may take the place of the last, the second that of the one before last etc.) (Numbers Rabbah 13:16).

Verse 21

פר אחד ONE BULLOCK, [A YOUNG ONE, בן בקר] — in allusion to Abraham of whom it states, (Genesis 18:7) "And he took a young bull (בן בקר)" (Numbers Rabbah 13:14).
איל אחד ONE RAM — in allusion to Isaac, with reference to whom Scripture states, (Genesis XXII 13) "and he (Abraham) took the ram (האיל) [and offered it up … in the stead of his son]" (Numbers Rabbah 13:14).
כבש אחד ONE LAMB — in allusion to Jacob of whom Scripture states, (Genesis 30:40) "and Jacob did separate the lambs" (Numbers Rabbah 13:14).

Verse 22

שעיר עזים [ONE] KID OF THE GOATS — in order to make expiation for the "selling of Joseph" with reference to whom it states, (Genesis 37:31) "and they slaughtered a kid of the goats" (Numbers Rabbah 13:13).

Verse 23

ולזבח השלמים בקר שנים AND FOR A SACRIFICE OF PEACE-OFFERINGS TWO OXEN — The two peace-offerings are an allusion to Moses and Aaron who made peace between Israel and their Father in Heaven (Numbers Rabbah 13:19).
אילם כבשים ועתדים — three species — in allusion to the three divisions of the nation: priests, Levites and ordinary Israelites, and also in allusion to the Pentateuch, the Prophets and the Hagiographa, the three sections of the Holy Scriptures. There are three times "five", in allusion to the "Five Books of Moses", to the five Commandments written on one of the Tablets and to the five written on the other (Numbers Rabbah 14:10). Thus far have I found in the work of R. Moshe the Preacher.

Verse 24

ביום השלישי וגו׳ means, ON THE THIRD DAY, THE PRINCE who offered WAS OF THE SONS OF ZEBULUN, and similar is the meaning of the parallel statement in the case of all of them (all the other tribes). In the case of Nethaneel, however, of whom it is stated, (v. 18) הקריב "[on the second day] did Nethaneel the son of Zuar offer", it is appropriate to use after it the phrase: "the prince of Issachar", since it has already mentioned his name and the fact that he offered, whilst in the case of the others of whom it is not stated "he offered", this phrase is the appropriate one, viz., the prince belonging to the sons of that-and-that tribe, when the meaning of the entire sentence is: on that day the prince who offered was of the sons of so-and-so.

Verse 25

Verse 26

Verse 27

Verse 28

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Verse 30

Verse 31

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Verse 80

Verse 81

Verse 82

Verse 83

Verse 84

ביום המשח אתו [THIS WAS THE DEDICATION OFFERING OF THE ALTAR] IN THE DAY WHEN IT WAS ANOINTED — This implies that on the very same day that it was anointed an offering was brought; but how, then, can I explain, (v. 88) "[This was dedication of the altar] after that it was anointed"? As intimating that it was first anointed and afterwards — but still on the

same day — the offering was brought. Or, perhaps, these words אחרי המשח mean "some time (i.e. many days) after it was anointed", and the phrase here ביום המשח אתו is merely intended to intimate that it was anointed during the day-time (and not at night)! This cannot be so, because when it states, (Leviticus 7:36) "In the day that he anointed them (Aaron and his sons)" we learn that it (the altar) was anointed during the day-time. What, then, must be the meaning of ביום המשח here? What we first suggested — that on the very same day that it was anointed the offering was brought (cf. Sifrei Bamidbar 53).
קערת כסף שתים עשרה TWELVE CHARGERS OF SILVER — This intimates: these are the same chargers which they had brought as free-will gifts and nothing to disqualify them had happened to them in the meantime (Sifrei Bamidbar 53).

Verse 85

שלשים ומאה הקערה אחת וגו׳ EACH CHARGER OF SILVER WEIGHING AN HUNDRED AND THIRTY SHEKELS etc. — Why is this stated at all since it has already been staled several times? But because it has only been said "the weight thereof was 130 shekels", but it does not explain according to which shekel this is reckoned, it (Scripture) therefore repeats it (the number of shekels) here and then makes a general statement with regard to all of them: "all the silver of the vessels was [two thousand and four hundred shekels] after the shekels of the Sanctuary".
כל כסף הכלים ALL THE SILVER OF THE VESSELS [WAS TWO THOUSAND AND FOUR HUNDRED SHEKELS etc.] — By giving the sum total of the shekels it teaches you that the vessels of the Sanctuary had their weight exact (thus e.g. a bowl of 70 shekels was exactly 70, neither more nor less) — whether one weighed them each separately or whether one weighed them all together he got neither more nor less than it should have been (Sifrei Bamidbar 54).

Verse 86

כפות זהב שתים עשרה THE GOLDEN SPOONS WERE TWELVE — Why is this stated at all, since we have been told that twelve princes brought each one spoon? But because it is stated in each instance: "one spoon עשרה זהב", I might explain it either as meaning: it was of gold but its weight was ten shekels of silver, or, perhaps, not so, but it means: one spoon of silver and the weight thereof ten gold-shekels — and the gold-shekels have not their weight equal to those of silver-shekels — Scripture therefore states here, "golden spoons" — the spoons themselves were of gold (Sifrei Bamidbar 55).

Verse 87

Verse 88

Verse 89

ובבא משה AND WHEN MOSES CAME [INTO THE TENT OF MEETING … THEN HE HEARD THE VOICE SPEAKING UNTO HIM FROM OFF THE COVERING THAT WAS UPON THE ARK OF THE TESTIMONY] — When two Scriptural verses apparently contradict each other there comes a third and reconciles them. We have got such a case here: one verse says, (Leviticus 1:1) "[And the Lord called unto Moses] and spoke unto him out of the appointed tent", which was outside the Vail, and another verse says, (Exodus 25:22). "And I shall speak unto

thee from off the Ark-lid", thus within the Vail — then this (our verse) comes and reconciles them: Moses entered the appointed tent, and there he heard the Voice which came from above the Ark-lid, from between the two Cherubim — the Voice issued from Heaven unto the space between the two Cherubim, and from there it issued into the appointed tent where it was heard by Moses. (Sifrei Bamidbar 58 1; cf. Rashi on Exodus 25:22.)
וישמע את הקול AND HE HEARD THE VOICE — One might think it was a very low voice! Scripture, however, states "the Voice" (with the definite article — the well-known Voice) — it was that thunderous Voice with which He spoke to him on Sinai, and yet when it reached the door of the appointed tent it broke off and did not issue beyond the appointed tent (and therefore it states Leviticus 1:1 מאהל מועד from the appointed tent, and not באהל מועד, because the Voice confined itself to the Interior of the אהל מועד; see Rashi on Leviticus 1:1) (cf. Sifrei Bamidbar 58:2).
מדבר is the same as מתדבר (it is the Hitphael form with assimiliated ת) — "He heard the Voice uttering itself". It is out of reverence for the Most High God that Scripture speaks thus: "The Voice was speaking to itself", and Moses would listen in (i. e., he could not help hearing it).
וידבר אליו AND HE SPOKE UNTO HIM — unto him: thus excluding Aaron from the Divine communications (cf. Rashi on Leviticus 1:1, s. v. אליו).

Chapter 8

Verse 1

Verse 2

בהעלתך WHEN THOU LIGHTEST [THE LAMPS] — Why is the section treating of the candelabrum put in juxtaposition with the section dealing with the offerings of the princes? Because when Aaron saw the dedication offerings of the princes, he felt distressed because neither he nor his tribe was with them in the dedication, whereupon the Holy One, blessed be He, said to him, "By your life! Your part is of greater importance than theirs, for you will kindle and set in order the lamps" (cf. Midrash Tanchuma, Beha'alotcha 5; see also Nachmanides).
בהעלתך lit., WHEN THOU MAKEST [THE LIGHTS] RISE — Because the flame rises upwards (עולה), an expression denoting "ascending" is used of kindling them (the lights), implying that one must kindle them until the light ascends of itself (Shabbat 21a). — Furthermore our Rabbis derived from here (from the expression בהעלתך) that there was a step in front of the candelabrum upon which the priest stood while preparing the lights (Sifrei Bamidbar 59).
אל מול פני המנורה OVER AGAINST THE CANDLESTICK — i.e. over against the central lamp which is not on one of the branches, like the others, but on the body (the central shaft) of the candelabrum itself (cf. Menachot 98b).
יאירו שבעת הנרות SHALL THE SEVEN LAMPS GIVE LIGHT — the seven lamps: this central lamp itself which naturally gave light over against the shaft (the פני המנורה) and the six lamps which were on the six branches, viz., the three on the east side of the central shaft should have their wicks turned towards the central one, and similarly the three on the west should have the ends of their wicks turned towards the central one (cf. Sifrei Bamidbar 59). And why was this? In order that people should not say: He (God) is in need of its (the candlestick's) light (cf. Midrash Tanchuma, Beha'alotcha 5).

Verse 3

ויעש כן אהרן AND AARON DID SO — This is stated in order to tell the praise of Aaron — that he did not deviate [from G-d's command] (cf. Sifrei Bamidbar 60).

Verse 4

וזה מעשה המנרה AND THIS IS THE WORK OF THE CANDLESTICK — "This" — we may gather that the Holy One, blessed be He, showed it to him (Moses) with His finger, because he was puzzled by it (how to construct it); and that is why it states, "this is [the construction of the candlestick]" (Sifrei Bamidbar 61; Menachot 29a).
מקשה means batediz in O. F., — [English = beaten], an expression of the same meaning as in (Daniel 5:6) "[and his feet] knocked (נקשן) one against another". There was a block weighing a talent of gold and he (who made the candlestick) beat it with the hammer, and cut away with a chisel in order that its branches might be made to spread out as they should do, and it was not formed of separate pieces made into a whole by joining them together.
עד ירכה עד פרחה UNTO THE SHAFT THEREOF, UNTO THE FLOWERS THEREOF — Its ירך was the boxlike base which was above the feet (thus, the feet stood beneath this; cf. Rashi on Exodus 25:31), hollow, like the candlesticks of princely houses (lit., as the candlesticks standing before the princes).
עד ירכה עד פרחה — This phrase means as much as: the whole body of the candlestick and everything attached to it.
עד ירכה — FROM THE BASE which is a massive part.
עד פרחה — UP TO ITS FLOWER, which was the most slender piece of work in it — all was beaten out of the lump. The double form of עד (עד … עד) is used in this sense (to include everything), as e.g., (Judges 15:5) "[and he (Samson) burnt up everything] from the shocks to (עד) the standing corn and to (ועד) the vineyard and the olives".
כמראה אשר הראה וגו׳ ACCORDING UNTO THE PATTERN WHICH [THE LORD] HAD SHOWED [MOSES] — i. e. according to the shape which he had shewn him on the mountain, as it is said, (Exodus 25:40) and see, that thou make them after their pattern [which was shewn thee in the mountain]".
כן עשה את המנורה SO HE MADE THE CANDELABRUM — "he" means, the one who made it (not Moses, as might be assumed from the wording of the text; the subject is suppressed and it means no more than: so was the candlestick made). A Midrashic explanation is: By the instrumentality of the Holy One, blessed be He, it was made of itself (according to this the subject is "God" who is mentioned immediately before) (Midrash Tanchuma, Beha'alotcha 3; cf. Rashi on Exodus 25:31).

Verse 5

Verse 6

קח את הלוים means, win them over with fine words: "Happy are ye that ye are privileged to be servants of the Omnipresent!" (cf. Rashi on Leviticus 8:2.)

Verse 7

הזה עליהם מי חטאת SPRINKLE UPON THEM WATER OF PURIFYING — water in which the ashes of the Red Heifer are mingled; on account of those among them who might have become unclean through contact with dead persons.

והעבירו תער AND LET THEM SHAVE [ALL THEIR FLESH] — I have found in the work of R. Moses the Preacher the following: Because they were made propitiatory substitutes for the firstborn who had worshipped the idol (the Golden Calf), and it (idolatry) is called (Psalms 106:28) "offerings to the dead", and the leper is also called dead (cf. Numbers 12:12), it (Scripture) requires them to shave their body like lepers.

Verse 8

ולקחו פר בן בקר AND LET THEM TAKE A YOUNG BULLOCK, — and this was to be a burnt offering, as it is said, (v. 12) "and thou shalt offer the one [as a sin offering] and the other as a burnt offering", and it (a bullock) was the communal offering prescribed (Numbers 15:24) in case of idol worship committed by the community (here the firstborn are regarded as a community).
ופר שני AND ANOTHER BULLOCK [THOU SHALT TAKE TO BE A SIN OFFERING] — What is the force of the word שני, the second? (There is no corresponding word אחד at the beginning of the sentence!). But it is used to suggest a comparison between the two sacrifices: How is it in the case of the burnt offering? It is not permitted to be eaten (for it is entirely burnt on the altar)! So, too, is this sin-offering not permitted to be eaten (in spite of being a חטאת חיצונה which as a rule may be eaten; cf. Rashi on Leviticus 9:11). And in this fact (that the חטאת prescribed was not eaten) there is some support in the statement of Torath Cohanim just quoted for his (R. Moses the Preacher's) view (that the עולה which is paired with it was that enjoined for idolatry committed by the community) (cf. Sifra, Vayikra Dibbura d'Chovah, Chapter 3 4). — I, however, say that it (the fact that this חטאת was not to be eaten) was an occasional (exceptional) decision (הוראת שעה) (contrary to the rule of a חטאת חיצונה, and not because it was intended as a חטאת לע"ז as asserted by R. Moses), for if his view were correct they would have had to offer a goat (as prescribed in Numbers 15:24 not a bullock) as a sin offering to expiate for idolatry together with a bullock for a burnt offering mentioned here.

Verse 9

והקהלת את כל עדת AND THOU SHALT GATHER THE WHOLE ASSEMBLY [OF THE CHILDREN OF ISRAEL] TOGETHER — Because the Levites were made, so to speak, an expiatory offering in their stead, let them come and stand at their offering and put their hands upon them (the Levites) as is prescribed in the case of an offering (cf. Leviticus 1:4).

Verse 10

Verse 11

והניף אהרן את הלוים תנופה AND AARON SHALL MAKE A WAVING WITH THE LEVITES — just as the guilt offering of the leper (to whom the Levites are compared in some respect; cf. Rashi on v. 7) required waving whilst alive. — Three times is the command of waving the Levites mentioned in this section (vv. 11, 13, 15): the first refers to the sons of Kohath; therefore (because it is they who are referred to) Scripture adds with regard to them, "that they may execute the service of the Lord" — for it was upon them (the sons of Kohath) that the service of the most holy objects: the Ark, the table, etc., devolved. The second refers to the sons of Gershon, and therefore Scripture adds with regard to them, "a waving for the Lord", for upon them devolved the service of the holy

(though not the most holy) objects: the hangings and the catches which were visible in the Holy of Holies. The third refers to the sons of Merari.

Verse 12

Verse 13

Verse 14

Verse 15

Verse 16

נתנים נתנים FOR THEY ARE GIVEN, GIVEN ARE THEY [UNTO ME] — i.e., given twice: dedicated for bearing the holy objects and dedicated to sing in chorus in the Sanctuary.
פטרת means OPENING OF (such that open the womb, i. e. firstborn).

Verse 17

כי לי כל בכור FOR ALL THE FIRSTBORN [OF THE CHILDREN OF ISRAEL] ARE MINE — This means: they became Mine by strict right (lit., by the line of justice), because I protected them distinguishing between them and the firstborn of Egypt, and I took them as Mine — until they sinned by worshipping the Golden Calf, but now ואקח את הלוים I HAVE TAKEN THE LEVITES in their stead.

Verse 18

Verse 19

ואתנה וגו׳ AND I HAVE GIVEN [THE LEVITES etc.] — Five times are the "children of Israel" mentioned in this verse (where the last four times they might have been alluded to by a personal pronoun), in order to show what affection they are held by the Lord in that the mention of them is repeated five times in one verse corresponding in number to the "Five Books of the Torah". Thus I have seen stated in Genesis Rabbah (Leviticus Rabbah 2:4; cf. Genesis Rabbah 3:5).
ולא יהיה בבני ישראל נגף [AND I HAVE GIVEN THE LEVITES … TO DO THE SERVICE OF THE CHILDREN OF ISRAEL] THAT THERE BE NO PLAGUE AMONG THE CHILDREN OF ISRAEL [WHEN THE CHILDREN OF ISRAEL COME NIGH UNTO THE SANCTUARY] — The meaning is: I have given them etc. so that it should be unnecessary for them to come near to the Sanctuary, because [having sinned by worshipping the Calf], if they came near there would be a plague among them.

Verse 20

ויעש משה ואהרן וכל עדת וגו׳ AND MOSES AND AARON AND ALL THE CONGREGATION … DID [TO THE LEVITES ACCORDING UNTO ALL THAT THE LORD COMMANDED MOSES] —

i.e. Moses presented them (v. 13), Aaron made the waving with them (v. 11) and the Israelites put their hands (v. 10) upon the Levites' heads (cf., however, Ibn Ezra).

Verse 21

Verse 22

כן עשו ... ה' כאשר צוה AS THE LORD HAD COMMANDED [MOSES CONCERNING THE LEVITES] SO DID THEY [UNTO THEM] — This is repeated (cf. v. 20) to tell the praise of those who performed the rite (Moses, Aaron and the Israelites) and those who had it performed on them (the Levites) — that none of them put any obstacle in the way.

Verse 23

Verse 24

זאת אשר ללוים THIS IS THAT WHICH BELONGETH TO THE LEVITES [FROM TWENTY FIVE YEARS etc.] — This suggests: years (the question of age) can disqualify them for the service (i.e. if they are younger than 25 and older than 50 years), but bodily blemishes cannot disqualify them, [as in the case of priests] (Sifrei Bamidbar 62; Chullin 24a).
מבן חמש ועשרים FROM TWENTY AND FIVE [YEARS] AND UPWARD [THEY SHALL GO IN TO WAIT UPON THE SERVICE] — But in another passage, it states, (Numbers 4:3) "from thirty years old [and upwards … all that enter into the host to do the work in the tabernacle]"! How are these apparently contradictory passages to be reconciled? In the following way: From twenty five years on he (the Levite) comes to learn the laws regulating the service, and he studies for five years, and at the age of thirty he may actually do the service. — From here we may derive the principle that a pupil who does not see an auspicious omen (i. e. success) in his study during five years will never see it. (Sifrei Bamidbar 62; Chullin 24a.)

Verse 25

ולא יעבד עוד [AND FROM THE AGE OF FIFTY YEARS HE SHALL CEASE WAITING UPON THE SERVICE] AND SHALL DO NO MORE SERVICE — the service of bearing loads on the shoulder, but he still returns (i. e. may be called upon) for closing the Temple gates, for the service of singing and for loading sacred articles upon the wagons; for this is the meaning of (v. 26) "But he shall serve את אחיו" i. e. together with his brethren, just as the Targum renders it (not, "he shall serve his brethren, i. e. wait upon them) (cf. Sifrei Bamidbar 63).

Verse 26

לשמר משמרת TO KEEP THE CHARGE — i.e. to encamp round about the tent of meeting in order to keep strangers away, and to erect and dismantle it at the time of finishing and beginning the journey.

Chapter 9

Verse 1

בחדש הראשון [AND THE LORD SPAKE UNTO MOSES] IN THE FIRST MONTH — The section which appears at the commencement of this Book was not spoken before Eyar (the second month; cf. Numbers 1:1): you learn, therefore, that there is no "earlier" or "later" (no chronological order) in the Torah. But why, indeed, did not Scripture open the Book with this section? Because it implies something disparaging to Israel (Sifrei Bamidbar 64:1) — that during all the forty years they were in the wilderness they offered only this single Passover sacrifice (Tosafot on Kiddushin 38b s. v. הואיל)

Verse 2

במועדו AT ITS APPOINTED SEASON — even on Sabbath; במועדו AT ITS APPOINTED SEASON (stated again in v. 3) intimates that it must be offered even in a state of uncleanness (i.e. when the whole congregation, or at least its greater part is unclean as a result of having come in contact with a human corpse) (cf. Sifrei Bamidbar 65).

Verse 3

ככל חקותיו ACCORDING TO ALL RITES OF IT [… SHALL YE KEEP IT] — This refers to the laws relating to its body itself (i.e. the animal itself) while alive — that it must be "a lamb, without blemish, a male, one year old" (Exodus 12:5) (Sifrei Bamidbar 65).
וככל משפטיו AND ACCORDING TO ALL THE REGULATIONS THEREOF — This again refers to commands which have a bearing upon the animal itself but originating from another place (i.e. outside the animal itself), e.g. seven days for eating unleavened bread and during which the leaven must be removed from one's home. [Some editions have (cf. Nachmanides): the laws relating to the animal itself are that it must be "a lamb, without blemish, a male and one year old". Such as have to be practiced upon its body (note the difference in the meaning of this phrase, and the omission of מחקום אחר) are those mentioned in Exodus 12:9: "roasted with fire, its head with its legs and the inward parts thereof"; and finally such as go beyond the sacrifice itself: the eating of unleavened bread and the removal of leaven from the house].

Verse 4

וידבר משה וגו׳ AND MOSES SPAKE [TO THE CHILDREN OF ISRAEL THAT THEY SHOULD KEEP THE PASSOVER] — Why is this stated at all? Has it not already been said, (Leviticus 23:44) "And Moses declared [unto the children of Israel] the appointed festivals of the Lord"? But the reason is: when he heard on Sinai the section dealing with the festivals he told it to them then and he used to exhort them again about the festivals at the time when they had to be observed (lit., at the time of action) (Sifrei Bamidbar 66).

Verse 5

Verse 6

לפני משה ולפני אהרן [AND THERE WERE CERTAIN MEN, WHO … COULD NOT KEEP THE PASSOVER AND THEY CAME] BEFORE MOSES AND BEFORE AARON — At a time when both were sitting together in the House of Study they came and put this question to them. It would not be correct to say — as the words ""before Moses and before Aaron" might suggest — that they came to them one after

the other, because if Moses did not know the reply whence could Aaron know it? (cf. Sifrei Bamidbar 68; Bava Batra 119b).

Verse 7

למה נגרע WHEREFORE ARE WE KEPT BACK? — He (Moses) had said to them, "Sacrifices are not permitted to be offered by anyone who is in a state of uncleanness". They retorted, "למה נגרע" — Why should that prevent us? Let the blood be sprinkled on our behalf by clean priests, and let the flesh be eaten by the clean". (i.e. let us partake of the flesh at night when we shall already be clean: see Note). Thereupon he said to them: "Stand still (i.e. wait a short time) and I will hear [what the Lord will command concerning you]" — he said this with confidence, like a pupil who is certain that he will get information from his teacher at any time. Happy, indeed, is a human being (lit., one born of woman) who may so confidently rely that at any time when he wishes to do so he may speak with the Shechinah! — This section, in fact, ought to have been said by Moses, just as all the other sections of the Torah, only that these men were privileged that it should be promulgated through their intervention, because "meritorious deeds are brought about by worthy men" (Sifrei Bamidbar 68; Bava Batra 119b).

Verse 8

Verse 9

Verse 10

או בדרך רחקה [IF ANY MAN … SHALL BE UNCLEAN BY REASON OF A DEAD,] OR BE ON A DISTANT JOURNEY — There is a dot on it (on the ה of the word רחקה which letter is therefore regarded as non-existent; cf. Rashi on Genesis 18:9 and Note thereon), in order to tell that what Scripture means by בדרך רחקה is that it (the journey) need not really be a distant one, but that his sacrifice is postponed even though he was merely outside the threshold of the forecourt during the whole time that the ceremony of slaughtering the Passover sacrifice tasted. (Pesachim 93b, cf. Sifrei Bamidbar 69:2). — On the "Second Passover" one may have with him unleavened and leavened bread together in his house, and there is no festival in connection with it, and the eating of leaven is forbidden only together with it (the Passover Sacrifice) — i.e. while the sacrifice is being eaten (cf. Pesachim 95a).

Verse 11

Verse 12

Verse 13

Verse 14

וכי יגור אתכם גר ועשה פסח AND IF A STRANGER SHALL SOJOURN AMONG YOU, AND WILL KEEP THE PASSOVER [ACCORDING TO THE ORDINANCE OF THE PASSOVER … SO SHALL HE DO] — One might think that this verse implies that anyone who becomes a proselyte (גר) must keep the Passover offering rite immediately after his circumcision (even though it has not taken place just before Passover), therefore Scripture states, "yo shall have one ordinance, [both for the stranger, and for him that was born in the land]" (which implies that just as the native brings the offering on the fourteenth of Nisan, so the proselyte, too, must bring it only on the fourteenth of Nisan; cf. Rashi on Exodus 12:48). What the first part of the verse implies is, therefore, the following: "and if a proselyte will sojourn among you, and comes to celebrate the Passover rite together with his fellows, then according to the ordinance of the Passover and according to the manner thereof shall he do" (i.e. ועשה פסח is not a predicative clause — when he becomes a proselyte then shall he offer the Passover, i. e. offer it immediately — but it is a conditional clause, coordinate to וכי יגור אתכם and the apodosis begins with כחקת הפסח etc.) (Sifrei Bamidbar 71).

Verse 15

המשכן לאהל העדות means THE TABERNACLE which is made FOR the purpose of being THE TENT for the tablets of THE TESTIMONY.
יהיה על המשכן WAS UPON THE TABERNACLE — This has the sense of: was continuously being upon the Tabernacle. Similar is the usage in the whole section (i. e. the verbs ישכון ,יחנו ,יסעו etc. are imperfects expressing continuous action).

Verse 16

Verse 17

העלות הענן — Understand this as the Targum does: the departure (more lit., the raising itself). Similar is, (v. 21): תעלה הענן which means "when the cloud raised itself" (departed; in both cases the verbs are Niphal). It would not be correct to have written in these passages ולפי עֲלוֹת הענן and וְעָלָה הענן (the verbs in the Kal), because this would not be an expression denoting departure, but "springing forth" and "rising", just as, (1 Kings 18:44): "Behold a little cloud as small as a man's hand rises (עלה) from the sea."

Verse 18

(18) על פי ה' יסעו " AT THE COMMANDMENT OF THE LORD [THE CHILDREN OF ISRAEL] JOURNEYED — We have learned in the Boraitha dealing with "the structure of the Tabernacle" (s. 13), "As soon as the Israelites set forth on a journey the pillar of cloud rolled itself up (contracted itself) and extended itself out above the camp of the sons of Judah, like a beam, whereupon they blew a "Tekiah", a "Teruah", and another "Tekiah". It (the cloud) did not, however, move off until Moses said, (Numbers 10:35): "Rise up, O Lord!" — the latter statement is to be found in the Sifrei Bamidbar 84:5 (on the verse quoted) — and then the banner of the camp of Judah marched forward.
ועל פי ה' יחנו AT THE COMMANDMENT OF THE LORD THEY ENCAMPED — As soon as the Israelites encamped the pillar of cloud rose in a column and extended itself above the camp of the sons of Judah like the roof of a hut, and did not depart until Moses said, (Numbers 10:36), "Return, O Lord, unto the myriads of thousands of Israel!" — You must say (admit; more lit., be

saying) that this is the meaning of (Numbers 10:23) “at the commandment of the Lord [they encamped and at the commandment of the Lord they journeyed...]” but also by the agency of Moses (Sifrei Bamidbar 84:5).

Verse 19

Verse 20

וישׁ means as much as AND SOMETIMES; (it is therefore to be translated: and there were times).
ימים מספר means, A FEW DAYS.

Verse 21

Verse 22

או ימים means, [OR] A FULL YEAR, just as, (Leviticus 25:29) “A full year (ימים) shall he have the right of redemption”.

Chapter 10

Verse 1

Verse 2

לך עשה MAKE THEE etc. — make לך, “for thyself” (on thy own behalf) suggests that they shall blow them in your presence, as before a king, as it is said, (with reference to Moses) (Deuteronomy 33:5) ויהי בישרון מלך “and he was king in Jeshurun”.
לך עשה MAKE THEE — from that which is thine own and not from the common funds (Sifrei Bamidbar 72).
לך עשה MAKE FOR THYSELF” also suggests: you make them and use them, but no one else.
למקרא העדה [THAT THOU MAYEST USE THEM] FOR THE CALLING OF THE ASSEMBLY — i. e. when you wish to speak to the Sanhedrin and the rest of the people and you summon them to assemble unto you, you shall summon them by the trumpets.
ולמסע את המחנות AND FOR THE JOURNEYING OF THE CAMPS — at the time of departing on the journeys you shall blow them as a signal. Consequently you must say that they used to travel by a three-fold call: by the command of the Holy One, blessed be He, by the word of Moses (cf. Rashi on v. 18 at the end), and by the sound of the trumpets (Boraitha d’ Mlechet ha-Mishkan s. 13).
מקשה OF BEATEN WORK — from a block of silver you shall make them by hammer blows (Sifrei Bamidbar 72).

Verse 3

ותקעו בהן WHEN THEY BLOW WITH THEM — with both of them; and this (protracted sound, a “Tekiah” on both trumpets) is the signal for summoning the congregation, as it is said here, “then all the

congregation shall assemble unto thee at the entrance of the tent of meeting".

Verse 4

ואם באחת יתקעו AND IF THEY BLOW BUT WITH ONE TRUMPET (i.e. a "Tekiah" on one trumpet) — it is a sign to summon the princes, as it is said here, "then the princes shall gather themselves unto thee". Their meeting place, too, was at the entrance of the tent of meeting. This is derived from a ש"ג in the Sifrei (Sifrei Bamidbar 73:1 from the use in both cases of the same expression ותקעו and יתקעו: not from ונועדו — ונועדו as erroneously stated.)

Verse 5

ותקעתם תרועה WHEN YE BLOW AN ALARM — The signal for the camps to set out on the journey was a Tekiah, a Teruah (a tremulous sound) and again a Tekiah. Thus is it derived in the Siphre from the apparently redundant verses (Sifrei Bamidbar 73:2; cf. Rosh Hashanah 34a).

Verse 6

Verse 7

ובהקהיל את הקהל וגו׳ AND WHEN THE CONGREGATION IS TO BE GATHERED TOGETHER etc. — Because it is stated, (v. 2) "and they shall be unto thee for calling together the assembly and for the journeying of the camps", you must reason as follows: How is it in the case of "the calling of the assembly"? A Tekiah was made by two priests and on both of them (on two trumpets), since it states, (v. 3) "when they blow with them (cf. Rashi on that verse). So, too, is the setting out of the camps to be by means of both trumpets. One might, however, also reason as follows: How is it in the case of the "journeyings of the camps"? The priest sounds a Tekiah, a Teruah, and another Tekiah (cf. Rashi on v. 5)! So, too, in the case of "calling the assembly together", he blows a Tekiah, a Teruah and a Tekiah, so that it follows that there is no difference between the signal for "calling the assembly" and that for the "journeyings of the camps". Scripture, however, states here: "And when the congregation is to be gathered together, etc." to intimate that no Teruah is sounded at the calling of the assembly (ולא תריעו), and the same rule applies to calling the princes. — Thus we have a different signal for the three occasions: "the calling of the assembly" is done by both trumpets, and that of the princes by one — but neither in this nor that signal is there a Teruah, whilst "the journeying of the camps" is done by both trumpets with a Teruah, a Tekiah preceding and following it (Sifrei Bamidbar 74).

Verse 8

ובני אהרן... יתקעו AND THE SONS OF AARON … SHALL BLOW [WITH THE TRUMPETS] at the occasions of these (above-mentioned) assemblings and journeyings.

Verse 9

Verse 10

על עלתיכם [YE SHALL BLOW WITH THE TRUMPETS] OVER YOUR BURNT OFFERINGS — Scripture is speaking of a communal burnt offering (cf. Sifrei Bamidbar 77; Arakhin 11b).
אני ה׳ אלהיכם I AM THE LORD YOUR GOD — From here we derive the regulation that on the New Year Festival Biblical verses referring to God's Kingdom (מלכיות) must be recited together with such as have reference to the blowing of the Shofar (שופרות), and to Divine remembrance (זכרונות), because it states here "ותקעתם" — which is an allusion to "לזכרון שופרות;" — which is an allusion to זכרונות; and אני ה׳ אלהיכם — which is an allusion to מלכיות etc. (Sifrei Bamidbar 77; cf. Rashi on Leviticus 23:24 and Note thereon).

Verse 11

בחדש השני [IN THE SECOND YEAR] IN THE SECOND MONTH [THE CLOUD DEPARTED] — Consequently you must say that they spent at Choreb twelve months less ten days, since on the New Moon of Sivan (the third month) they encamped there (Exodus 19:1) and did not journey until the twentieth of Eyar of the following year.

Verse 12

למסעיהם means, in accordance with the regulations set forth for the journeys of their divisions — which should be the first to set out and which the last.
במדבר פארן IN THE WILDERNESS OF PARAN — The place "Kibroth-hattavah" (Numbers 12:34) was in the wilderness of Paran and there they encamped after this journey (cf. Numbers 33:16—17 with our verse and with Numbers 11:34—35).

Verse 13

Verse 14

Verse 15

Verse 16

Verse 17

והורד המשכן THEN THE TABERNACLE WAS TAKEN DOWN — As soon as the division of Judah was on the point of journeying, Aaron and his sons went in (into the Tabernacle), took down the Partition Vail and covered the Ark with it, as it is said, (Numbers 4:5) "and when the camp setteth forward (i. e. is on the point of setting forward) Aaron shall come, and his sons, [and they shall take down the Partition Vail, etc.]"; the sons of Gershon and the sons of Merari then dismantled the Tabernacle, and loaded it on the waggons, and started off (so Berliner's edition which adds ונוסעים). The Ark and the other holy vessels, the burden of the sons of Kohath (cf. Numbers 3:31), remained as they were, covered over, the latter hanging on poles, until the division of the sons of Reuben set out, and only after that did (v. 21) "the Kohathites set forward".

Verse 18

Verse 19

Verse 20

Verse 21

נשאי המקדש means, the bearers of the holy articles (not of the structure of the Sanctuary itself for this was the burden of the sons of Gershon and Merari; cf. v. 17).
והקימו את המשכן AND THEY SET UP THE TABERNACLE [BEFORE THEY CAME] — this means: The sons of Gershon and the sons of Merari who were in front of them (the Kohathites) travelling together with the two divisions, those of Judah and Reuben, set up the Tabernacle as soon as the cloud rested, and the sign for encamping became visible above the division of the camp of Judah (cf. Rashi on 9:17). Now when they encamped and whilst the sons of Kohath were coming after them with the two last divisions (Ephraim and Dan), the sons of Gershon and the sons of Merari erected the Sanctuary. When the sons of Kohath arrived, they already found it in its proper place and they put into it the Ark, the table, the candelabrum and the altars. The following therefore is what the verse implies: והקימו, and they — i.e. those who had to erect the Tabernacle — erected it, עד before באם their arrival — the arrival of the sons of Kohath.

Verse 22

Verse 23

Verse 24

Verse 25

מאסף לכל המחנת [THEN THE BANNER OF THE CAMP OF THE CHILDREN OF DAN SET FORWARD] WHICH WAS THE GATHERER OF ALL THE CAMPS — The Talmud Yerushalmi Eruvin 5:1 has the following statement: Because the tribe of Dan consisted of numerous troops (i. e. was more numerous than each of the other tribes, except Judah which marched on the front, cf. Chapter II), it marched in the rear so that if anyone of the other tribes lost anything, he (Dan) restored it to him. (מאסף לכל המחנת therefore means "the one who gathered in everything belonging to all the camps".) — There is one authority that holds that they traveled in formation like a box (i.e. in a military square) and derives this from the text, (Numbers 2:17) "just as they encamp so shall they journey", and there is another authority that maintains that they traveled in a straight line like a beam, and derives this from the statement that Dan was "the gatherer of all the camps".

Verse 26

Verse 27

Verse 28

אלה מסעי means: This is the order, of their journeyings (i.e. these words do not mean, "these are the stations", as the introductory words of chapter Numbers 33:1, where the names of the stations are enumerated; here Scripture merely intends to state that this was the order which they had to keep when journeying).
ויסעו AND THEY JOURNEYED means, on the very same day mentioned at the beginning of the chapter did they set off.

Verse 29

חבב is identical with Jethro, as it is said, (Judges 4:11) of the sons of Hobab, the father-in-law of Moses". (Thus חתן משה in our verse is to be connected with חבב and not with רעואל המדיני immediately preceding). — But why then does it state (Exodus 2:18) "and they (the daughters of Jethro) came to Reuel, their father", since he was their grandfather and not their father? It teaches us that children are in the habit of calling their grandfather by the term "father". — He (Jethro) was called by several names: Jethro, because he added (it was through him there was added) a section to the Torah (viz., Exodus 18:21 ff.); Hobab (חֹבָב) because he loved (חָבַב) the Torah, etc.
נוסעים אנחנו אל המקום WE ARE JOURNEYING UNTO THE PLACE — Immediately — within three days — we shall enter the Land of Canaan. They said this, because on this first journey after leaving Sinai they really set out with a view to entering the Land of Israel, only that they sinned at the incident of "those who complained" which prevented their further progress (Numbers 11:1). — But why did Moses include himself with them in the statement " we are journeying" to enter the land? Because the decree that he should not enter it had not yet been made regarding him, and he was yet under the belief that he would enter (cf. Sifrei Bamidbar 78:3).

Verse 30

אל ארצי ואל מולדתי [AND HE SAID TO HIM, I WILL NOT GO; BUT I WILL DEPART] TO MINE OWN LAND, AND TO MY KINDRED — (the Hebrew may be translated: but for my own land and for my own kindred I must go) — "I must go" whether for the sake of (אל) my property (ארצי) or for the sake of (אל) my family (cf. Sifrei Bamidbar 79).

Verse 31

אל נא תעזב LEAVE [US] NOT, I PRAY THEE — The word נא is an expression of entreaty. Here it means: I beg of you, not to leave usin order that people should not say, "Jethro did not become a proselyte out of pure love for the Jewish faith. He believed that the proselytes, too, would have a portion in the Land; now, however, that he saw that they will have no portion in it he has deserted them and gone his own way (Sifrei Bamidbar 80).
כי על כן ידעת FOR THOU KNOWEST OUR ENCAMPMENT IN THE WILDERNESS] — For (כי) it is fitting for you to do this, because (על כן) you have known our

encampments in the wilderness and you have seen the miracles and the mighty deeds that have been wrought for us.
כי על כן ידעת — This is similar to על אשר ידעת, like (Genesis 38:26) "For (כי) she has acted rightly, because (על כן) I did not give her to Selah, my son"; (Genesis 19:8): "For (כי) this kindness please do out of respect to me, because (על כן) they have come under the shadow of my roof"; (Genesis 33:10): "For (כי) it is fitting and proper for you to accept my present, because (על כן) I have seen your face."
והיית לנו לעינים — The verb is in the past tense and we have to understand it just as the Targum renders it: and all the mighty deeds that have been wrought for us thou hast seen with thine own eyes. Another explanation is that it is the future tense: whatever things will be hidden from our eyes, you will enlighten our eyes about it. Still another explanation is that the passage means that you will be held in affection by us as our "very eye-balls". as it is said, (Deuteronomy 10:19) "and ye shall love the stranger" (Sifrei Bamidbar 80).

Verse 32

והיה הטוב ההוא AND IT SHALL BE THAT WHAT GOODNESS [THE LORD SHALL DO UNTO US, THE SAME WILL WE DO UNTO THEE] — What good did they actually bestow upon him (i.e. when did they redeem their promise)? They (our Sages) say: When the Israelites were parcelling out the Land the most fertile part of Jericho proved to extend over an area of 500 by 500 cubits; they left it unparcelled and said: He in whose portion of land the Sanctuary will be built shall take it as a substitute for giving up the land upon which the Temple was built. In the meantime, however, they gave it to the children of Jethro — to Jonadab the son of Rechab, [as it is said, (Judges 1:16) "And the children of the Kenite, Moses' father-in-law, went up out of the city of the palm tree" (which is identical with Jericho; cf. Deuteronomy 34:3)] (Sifrei Bamidbar 81).

Verse 33

דרך שלשת ימים [AND THEY DEPARTED FROM THE MOUNT OF THE LORD] THREE DAYS' JOURNEY — A distance of three days' journey they miraculously travelled in one day, because the Holy One, blessed be He, desired to bring them straight away into the Land (cf. Sifrei Bamidbar 82).
וארון ברית ה' נסע לפניהם דרך שלשת ימים AND THE ARK OF THE COVENANT OF THE LORD WENT BEFORE THEM IN THE THREE DAYS' JOURNEY — This was the Ark that went with them whenever they waged war and in which the broken Tablets were placed. It traveled in front of them a distance of three days' journey to prepare for them a proper place for encampment (Sifrei Bamidbar 82; Talmud Yerushalmi Shekalim 6:1).

Verse 34

וענן ה' עליהם יומם AND THE CLOUD OF THE LORD WAS UPON THEM BY DAY — Seven times is the word ענן used in the account of their journeys alluding to four clouds which screened them on all four sides, one that was above them, one beneath their feet, and one in front of them which leveled the elevations and raised the depressions, and killed all serpents and scorpions (Sifrei Bamidbar 83:1; Mekhilta; Br. d' Melechet ha-Mishkan 14).
FROM THE CAMP — From the place where they encamped.

Verse 35

ויהי בנסע הארן AND IT CAME TO PASS WHEN THE ARK PROCEEDED [THAT MOSES SAID etc.] — He (the Lord; cf. Shabbat 115a) made for it (for this

section) dividing marks (inverted "Nuns"), in front and behind it, in order to indicate that this is not its proper place (it would more fittingly find a place in the section dealing with the march of the people in chapter Numbers II. after v. 17). But why, then, is it written here? In order to make a break between the narrative of one punishment and that of another punishment etc., as is stated in the Talmudic chapter commencing with כל כתבי (Shabbat 115b, cf. Sifrei Bamidbar 84:1).
קומה ה' RISE UP O LORD — Because it (the Ark) was in front of them a distance of three days' march, Moses exclaimed, "Stay and wait for us, and do not travel further away from us; this is to be found in Tanchuma ויקהל Sedra on 2:10:7.
ויפצו איביך [RISE UP, O LORD] AND LET THINE ENEMIES BE SCATTERED — i.e. those who massed for battle.
וינסו משנאיך AND LET THOSE THAT HATE THEE FLEE BEFORE THEE, — this refers to the pursuing enemies (those actually engaged in battle) (Sifrei Bamidbar 84:3).
משנאיך THOSE THAT HATE THEE — These are those who hate Israel, because whoever hates Israel, hates "Him who spoke and the world came into existence", as it is said, (Psalms 83:3, 4) "[For lo, thine enemies are in an uproar] and they that hate Thee have lifted up the head" — and who are these that hate Thee? The next verse states this (v. 4): "They who have taken crafty counsel against thy people" (Sifrei Bamidbar 84:4).

Verse 36

שובה ה' [AND WHEN IT RESTED HE SAID] שובה O LORD — Menachem ben Seruk renders it (the word שובה) by an expression denoting "rest". Similar is (Isaiah 30:15) "In rest (בשובה) and tranquility shall ye be saved" (cf. Ibn. Ezra).
רבבות אלפי ישראל [GIVE REST O LORD UNTO] THE MYRIADS OF THOUSANDS OF ISRAEL — This teaches us that the Shechinah does not rest upon Israel if they are less in number than twenty-two thousand (Yevamot 64a; Sifrei Bamidbar 84:5).

Chapter 11

Verse 1

ויהי העם כמתאננים AND THE PEOPLE WERE COMPLAINING — The term העם "the people" always denotes wicked men. Similarly it states, (Exodus 17:4) "what shall I do unto this people (לעם הזה)? [yet a little and they will stone me]", and it further states, (13:10) "This evil people [which refuses to hear my words]". But when they are worthy men who are spoken of they are called עמי "My people", as it is said, (Exodus 5:1) "Let My people go"; (Micah 6:3) "O My people, what have I done unto thee" (Sifrei Bamidbar 85).
כמתאננים — The term מתאננים denotes [people who seek] "a pretext" — they seek a pretext how to separate themselves from following the Omnipresent. Similarly is stated in the narrative of Samson, (Judges 14:4) "for he sought a pretext (תואנה) [against the Philistines]" (Sifrei Bamidbar 85).
רע באזני ה' means a pretext that was evil in the ears of the Lord, i.e., that they intended that it should reach His ears and that He might show annoyance. They said: "Woe unto us! How weary we have become on this journey: it is now three days that we have had no rest from the wearisomeness of the march!"
ויחר אפו AND HIS WRATH GLOWED — He said in anger: How ungrateful you are, "I meant it for your good — that you might immediately come into the land".

בקצה המחנה [AND THE FIRE … DESTROYED THEM THAT WERE] IN THE EXTREMITY OF THE CAMP — i.e. those amongst them who were extreme in baseness — these were "the mixed multitude". But R. Simeon the son of Manassia said: it means that the fire consumed the most distinguished and prominent ones among them (cf. Sifrei Bamidbar 85 and Rashi's two explanations of ומקצה אחיו on Genesis 47:2).

Verse 2

ויצעק העם אל משה AND THE PEOPLE CRIED UNTO MOSES — A parable! This may be compared to the case of an earthly king who was angry with his son, and the son went to a friend of his father and said to him, "Go and ask forgiveness for me from father!" (Sifrei Bamidbar 86).
ותשקע האש THEN THE FIRE SANK — it sank on the very spot; because if it had turned along one of the sides of the camp it would gradually have rolled along the whole of that side (Sifrei Bamidbar 86).

Verse 3

Verse 4

והאספסף AND THE THRONG — This was the mixed multitude that had gathered themselves unto them when they left Egypt (the word is from the root אסף, "to gather") (Sifrei Bamidbar 86). — The next words of the Biblical text must be inverted to read as follows:
וישבו גם בני ישראל ויבכו AND THE CHILDREN OF ISRAEL ALSO AGAIN WEPT together with them.
מי יאכלנו בשר WHO SHALL GIVE US FLESH TO EAT? — But did they not have flesh? Has it not been already stated, (Exodus 12:38) "and a mixed multitude went up with them and flocks and herds, [even very much cattle]"?! If you say, "They had already eaten them", then I reply, "But is it not stated at a later period, when they were about to enter the Land, (Numbers 32:1), "Now the children of Reuben had cattle in a very great multitude"? But the truth is that they were only seeking a pretext (Sifrei Bamidbar 86).

Verse 5

אשר נאכל במצרים חנם [WE REMEMBER THE FISH] WHICH WE DID EAT IN EGYPT FOR NOTHING — If you say that they meant that the Egyptians gave them fish for nothing (without payment), then I ask, "But does it not state, (Exodus 5:18): [Go, therefore, now, and work], for there shall no straw be given you"? Now, if they did not give them straw for nothing, would they have given them fish for nothing! — What then is the force of the word חנם? It means: free from (i.e. without us having been burdened with) heavenly commands (Sifrei Bamidbar 87).
את הקשאים THE CUCUMBERS — R. Simeon said, "Why did the manna change its flavor into that of anything one wished (as the Midrash states) except into these vegetables here mentioned, the taste of which it appears not to have assumed since the people lusted for them? Because they are injurious to nursing mothers. So indeed people say to a woman: Do not eat garlic and onions on account of the baby. A parable! This may be compared to a king, etc. as it is related in the Sifrei Bamidbar 87.
הקשאים These are concombres in O. F., (English = cucumbers).
אבטיחים are boudekes in O. F. (English = melons).
החציר are leeks, porels in O. F. [The Targum renders the names of the vegetables by בוצינייא etc.].

Verse 6

אל המן עינינו OUR EYES ARE ON THIS MANNA (i. e. we see nothing but this manna) — "manna in the morning, manna in the evening!" (Sifrei Bamidbar 87)

Verse 7

והמן כזרע גד AND THE MANNA WAS AS CORIANDER SEED — He who said that (the previous verse) did not say this: Israel said, "our eyes are only on this manna", but the Holy One, blessed be He had it written in the Torah, and the manna was like coriander seed" — as much as to say "See, ye people of the world, about what My sons were complaining, whilst as a matter of fact the manna is excellent in so many different ways!" (Sifrei Bamidbar 88).
כזרע גד i.e. it was round like גד, coriander-seed in O. F.
הבדלח is the name of a precious stone. BEDELLIUM. (Some editions add the O. F. קרישטל crystal).

Verse 8

שטו [AND THE PEOPLE] WENT ABOUT — The term שיוט (i. e. any form of the root שוט) denotes strolling about; esbanoyer in O. F., English to walk about leisurely — they got the manna without exertion (cf. however, Yoma 75a and thereon s. v. ירד המן עליו).
וטחנו ברחים וגו׳ AND THE PEOPLE GROUND IT WITH MILL STONES [OR POUNDED IT IN THE MORTAR, AND BAKED IT IN PANS] — As a matter of fact it (the manna) never went into a mill, nor a pot, nor a mortar, but its taste changed, according to one's desire, into that of ground or pounded or cooked grain (Sifrei Bamidbar 89).
בפרור — means [IN] A POT.
לשד השמן [AND ITS TASTE WAS AS THE TASTE OF] — לשד השמן i. e. moisture of oil. Thus did Dunash ibn Labrat explain it. Similar to it is, (Psalms 32:4) נהפך לשדי בחרבוני קיץ, where the ל in the word לשד is a root-letter, the meaning being: "my sap (לשדי) is turned by the drought of summer". Our Rabbis (Sifrei Bamidbar 89) explained it as meaning "breasts' (i. e. just as the suckling imbibes, so to speak, every possible flavor with the mother-milk. so the Israelites found all flavors in the manna; cf. Sifrei), but really the subject of "breasts" has nothing to do with oil. One cannot, however, in order to justify the explanation of our Rabbis say that השמן in לשד השמן has a meaning similar to (Deuteronomy 32:15) וישמן ישורון, "But Jeshurun waxed fat (וישמן)" (when the meaning would be: "And the taste of it was similar to that of a fat breast"), for then the מ ought to be punctuated with Kametz (our Tséré: הַשָּׁמֶן) and the accent ought to be on the last syllable, beneath the מ. Now, however, that the מ is punctuated with Patach Katon (our Segol) and the accent is on the ש, it can only have a sense connected with שמן "oil". As to the ש which is punctuated with Kametz Gadol (שָׁמֶן) and not with Segol (since the noun "oil" is שֶׁמֶן,) this is so because the word is at the end of the verse (and in the pausal form שָׁמֶן becomes שָׁמָן). — Another explanation is that לשד is an acrostic of לישׁ, "kneading", שמן "oil", דבש "honey", i. e. that the manna was like "dough kneaded with oil, and smeared with honey" (קטף literally means "to tear", and when used of dough it means "to tear a lump of dough into pieces for which purpose the kneader moistens his hands with some liquid; here with honey) (Sifrei Bamidbar 89). The rendering of Onkelos who translates the phrase by דלישׁ במשחא, "[as the taste] of dough with oil", inclines to the meaning given by Dunash, because dough which is kneaded with oil has in it some moisture of oil.

Verse 9

Verse 10

בכה למשפחתיו [THEN MOSES HEARD THE PEOPLE] WEEP THROUGHOUT THEIR FAMILIES — i.e. the members of each family gathered together and wept in order to display their discontent in public. Our Rabbis, however, said that למשפחתיו means "the people wept because of family affairs" — because of the intermarriage of blood-relaltives that had been forbidden to them (Sifrei Bamidbar 90; Yoma 75a).

Verse 11

Verse 12

כי תאמר אלי means, [HAVE I CONCEIVED ALL THIS PEOPLE] THAT THOU SHOULDST always SAY UNTO ME, "Carry them in thy bosom!?" And where did He speak thus to him? When He said to him, (Exodus 32:34) "Go, lead the people"; and it further states, (Exodus 6:13) "[And the Lord spoke unto Moses and unto Aaron] and gave them a charge concerning the children of Israel" saying unto them: "Take charge of them even under the risk (lit., under the condition) that they may stone you or at least insult you" (Sifrei Bamidbar 91; cf. Rashi on that verse).
על האדמה אשר נשבעת לאבתיו UNTO THE LAND WHICH THOU SWAREST UNTO THEIR FATHERS hast Thou bidden me to carry them in my bosom.

Verse 13

Verse 14

Verse 15

ואם ככה את עשה לי AND IF THOU DO THUS WITH ME [KILL ME, I PRAY THEE …] — The Hebrew word for "Thou" appears in the feminine form את instead of the masculine אתה to intimate that Moses' strength grew weak as that of a woman when the Holy one, blessed be He, showed him the punishment which He was to bring in future upon them for this (for their sin). He, (Moses) therefore, said before Him, "If so, kill me first" (Sifrei Bamidbar 91).
ואל אראה ברעתי AND LET ME NOT SEE MY EVIL — It ought to have written (according to the Midrashic explanation above) "and let me not see their evil", only that Scripture modified the expression (i.e. it used a euphemistic expression referring the evil to himself instead of to the whole people). This is one of the variations occurring in the Torah such as writers make for the purpose of modifying and improving the phrase (cf. Rashi on Genesis 18:22 and Midrash Tanchuma, Beshalach 16).

Verse 16

אספה לי GATHER UNTO ME [SEVENTY MEN OF THE ELDERS OF ISRAEL] — "This" — the Lord said — "is the reply to your complaint which you uttered (v. 14) I am not able to bear all this people alone"' (cf. Sifrei Bamidbar 92). But where were the first elders, that God commanded him to gather elders

anew? Had they not sat as judges together with them (with Moses and Aaron) in Egypt, as it is stated, (Exodus 3:16) "Go and gather the elders of Israel together"? But these had died by the consuming fire of Taberah (v. 3). They really had deserved this for their conduct at Sinai, as it is said, (Exodus 24:11) "And they beheld God" which means, that they comported themselves irreverently towards God — like a person who nibbles his bread and at the same time addresses the king — for this is the meaning of the words, "[And they saw God] and ate and drank". The Holy One, blessed be He, however, did not wish to give any cause for mourning at the joyous event of the Lawgiving, and therefore punished them here (at Taberah) (Midrash Tanchuma, Beha'alotcha 16).
אשר ידעת כי הם וגו׳ WHOM THOU KNOWEST TO BE [THE ELDERS OF THE PEOPLE, AND BAILIFFS OVER THEM] — i.e. them whom thou knowest to have been appointed officers (שמרים) over them (the Israelites) in Egypt in connection with the rigorous labour imposed on them, but they pitied them and were smitten by the Egyptian taskmasters on their account — as it is said, (Exodus 5:14) "and the officers of (שמד) the children of Israel were smitten". Now they were to become officers in their greatness (now when the Israelites had become great) just as they had suffered when they (the Israelites) were in distress (cf. Sifrei Bamidbar 92).
ולקחת אתם AND TAKE THEM [UNTO THE APPOINTED TENT] — win them over with fine words: "Happy are you that you are appointed chiefs over the children of the Omnipresent God" (cf. Sifrei Bamidbar 92).
והתיצבו שם עמך AND LET THEM PLACE THEMSELVES THERE WITH THEE, in order that the Israelites may see it and do them high esteem and honour, saying, "Beloved indeed must these be since they may enter together with Moses to hear Divine utterance from the mouth of the Holy One, blessed be He!" (Sifrei Bamidbar 92).

Verse 17

וירדתי AND I WILL COME DOWN [AND SPEAK WITH THEE THERE] This is one of the ten instances of the use of the term "coming down" written in the Torah to describe a Divine manifestation on earth (Sifrei Bamidbar 93).
ודברתי עמך AND I WILL SPEAK WITH THEE but not with them (Sifrei Bamidbar 93).
ואצלתי — Understand this as the Targum does: AND I SHALL MAKE GREAT. Similar is (Exodus 24:11) "And upon the great men of (אצילי) the children of Israel [He laid not his hands]".
ושמתי עליהם AND I WILL PUT IT UPON THEM — What was Moses like to at that moment? He was like to a light that is placed in a candlestick at which everybody lights his lamps and yet its illuminating power is not the least diminished (Sifrei Bamidbar 93).
ונשאו אתך AND THEY SHALL BEAR [THE BURDEN OF THE PEOPLE] WITH THEE — stipulate with them that they shall join you on the understanding that they take upon themselves the burden of my children — because they are troublesome people and refractory (Sifrei Bamidbar 92).
ולא תשא אתה לבדך THAT THOU BEAR IT NOT THYSELF ALONE — Here you have the answer to what you have said, (Numbers 11:14) "I am not able [to bear all this people] alone" (cf. Sifrei Bamidbar 93; Rashi on Numbers 11:16).

Verse 18

התקדשו means, prepare yourselves to receive punishment. Similarly it states, (Jeremiah 12:3) "and prepare them (והקדשם) for the day of slaughter" (Sifrei Bamidbar 94; cf. Rashi on Exodus 19:10).

Verse 19

Verse 20

עד חדש ימים BUT EVEN A WHOLE MONTH [SHALL YE EAT] — This was said in reference to the comparatively virtuous, who languish on their beds and only afterwards their soul departs from them; in reference to the wicked, however, it states, (v. 33) "and while the flesh was yet between their teeth [the wrath of the Lord glowed against the people]". Thus is it taught in the Sifrei Bamidbar 94. But in the Mechilta d'Rabbi Yishmael 16:13:1 (on Exodus 16:13) just the opposite is taught: the wicked ate the flesh and were in agony thirty days, while as for the comparatively virtuous, "the flesh was yet between their teeth, etc." (they suffered no prolonged agony, but died immediately).
עד אשר יצא מאפכם UNTIL IT COME OUT AT YOUR NOSTRILS — Understand this as the Targum does: until that you feel a loathing for it; i.e. it will seem to you that you have eaten more than enough of it, so that it will come out and be ejected by way of the nose.
והיה לכם לזרא AND BECOME SOMETHING STRANGE UNTO YOU — This means, that you will cast it away from you even more readily than you previously welcomed it (Sifrei Bamidbar 94). But in the work of Rabbi Moses the Preacher, I have seen it stated that there exists a language in which they call a sword "זרא".
את ה' אשר בקרבכם [BECAUSE THAT YE HAVE SCORNED] THE LORD WHO IS AMONG YOU — The latter words appear superfluous, but they are taken to suggest: Unless I had planted my Shechinah among you your heart would not have become so arrogant as to engage in all these matters (Sifrei Bamidbar 94).

Verse 21

ששׁ מאות אלף רגלי [THE PEOPLE AMONGST WHOM I AM ARE] SIX HUNDRED THOUSAND FOOTMEN — He was not particular to mention also the odd number — the remaining three thousand. But Rabbi Moses the Preacher explained that the number 600,000 is exact because only those who went forth from Egypt wept (since only they could have said, (v. 5) "We remember the fish which we did eat in Egypt", and they who left Egypt are described, as here, by the term רגלי added to the number 600,000; cf. Exodus 12:37).

Verse 22

הצאן והבקר ישחט SHALL THE FLOCKS AND HERDS BE SLAUGHTERED [FOR THEM TO SUFFICE THEM?] — This is one of those four things (Biblical passages) which R. Akiba interpreted in a certain way but R. Simeon did not interpret them similarly. Rabbi Akiba says: ששׁ מאות אלף רגלי... ואתה אמרת בשר אתן להם ואכלו חדש ימים הצאן ובקר — all this is to be taken literally and the words ומצא להם should be rendered by "would it suffice for them?", in the same sense as we find this word used in (Leviticus 25:26) "and he have sufficient (ומצא כדי) for redeeming it" (ומצא להם is taken as the equivalent of ומצא כדי להם). Now — R. Akiba continued — which case was worse? This or that when Moses exclaimed, (Numbers 20:10) Hear now, ye rebels!?" Obviously this case here was worse, only because he did not utter his doubt in public, Scripture (God) showed some regard for him and did not punish him, whilst that sin at Meriba took place in public, therefore Scripture does not show any regard for him. Rabbi Simeon, however, says: "God forbid!" — "Such an idea never entered the mind of that righteous man! He of whom Scripture writes, (Numbers 12:7) 'He is faithful in all my house' — would he have said, 'The Omnipresent cannot supply sufficient for us!' But what he said was this: '[the people, amongst whom I am, are] six hundred thousand footmen; and Thou hast said, I will give them flesh, for a whole month — and then You want to kill a

nation so great as this is?! Shall the flocks and the herds be slaughtered for them that they (the people) should immediately be killed, and this eating should be their last (lit., should satisfy them for ever: ומצא להם)?! Is this Your praise? Do people say to an ass, take (eat) this Kor of barley and then we will cut off thy head!'? The Holy One, blessed be He, thereupon said to him, 'But if I do not give them flesh, they will say that My hand has waxed short; would it be pleasing to you that the hand of the Lord should appear in their eyes to have waxed short? — Let them and a hundred like them perish but let not My hand appear to them to have waxed short even for a single moment'!" (Tosefta Sotah 6:4)

Verse 23

עתה תראה היקרך דברי THOU SHALT SEE NOW WHETHER MY WORD SHALL COME TO PASS UNTO THEE [OR NOT]. — R. Gamliel, the son of R. Judah ha-Nasi said, "The dialogue took the following course: Moses said, "One can never understand a babbler! (One can never fathom his meaning.) Since they are merely seeking a pretext You will never satisfy them (the meaning of the text is: If all the cattle in the world were slaughtered for them, ומצא להם, would this suffice them, i. e., would they be satisfied with that?), in the end they will always argue against You. If You give them flesh of large cattle (oxen) they will say 'We wanted that of small cattle (sheep)'; if You will give them flesh of sheep, they will say We wanted that of oxen', or, 'we wanted wild beasts (venison) and fowls', 'we wanted fish and locusts!' Thereupon He said to him, 'If that be so and I give them nothing at all, they will say that My hand has waxed short!' "Moses thereupon said, "I will go and appease them". He answered him: "Thou shalt see now whether My word shall come to pass unto thee — for they will not listen to thee". Moses went to appease them and said to them, "Is the hand of the Lord waxed short? Behold, he continued with the words used later by the Psalmist, (Psalms 78:20): "He smote the rock that the waters gushed out, etc. Surely then he can give bread also [and can provide flesh for His people!]". But they (the Israelites) said: "This what you have said is only a compromise (a way of satisfying us). He has really no power to grant our request!" This is what Scripture means by: "and Moses went out and spake to the people [the words of the Lord]" (i.e. he told them the words used by the Lord only with a different implication). Since, however, they would not listen to him, he gathered the seventy men of the elders [of the people] etc." (cf. Sifrei Bamidbar 95:1; Tosefta Sota 6:4).

Verse 24

Verse 25

ולא יספו [AND THEY PROPHESIED] BUT DID NOT CONTINUE (to prophesy) — i. e. they prophesied only that day alone. Thus is the phrase explained in Siphre. Onkelos, however, rendered renders it ולא פסקין "and they did not cease", meaning that the gift of prophecy never again departed from them (cf. Sanhedrin 17a and Rashi on Deuteronomy 5:19).

Verse 26

וישארו שני אנשים BUT THERE REMAINED TWO MEN [IN THE CAMP] — i. e. two of them that had been selected. They remained, in the camp because they said, "We are not worthy of this distinction" (Sifrei Bamidbar 95:2). והמה בכתובים [BUT THERE REMAINED TWO MEN IN THE CAMP] … AND THEY WERE AMONGST THEM THAT WERE WRITTEN — i.e. they were amongst those of them (of

the people) who had been selected to constitute the Sanhedrion. For all these were written down, mentioned expressly by their names, but the requisite number was chosen by lot, because the calculation gives for twelve tribes, six elders for each tribe, with the exception of two tribes to each of which there would belong only five elders. Moses said, "No tribe will listen to me to have one elder less for his tribe!" What did he do? He took seventy-two tablets and wrote on seventy of them the word "Elder" and on two he left the surface blank. He then selected six men of each tribe so that there were altogether 72. He said to them, "Draw your tablets from the urn". He in whose hand there came up a tablet bearing the inscription "Elder" was set apart as a member of the Sanhedrion, whilst to him in whose hand there came up a blank tablet, he said, "The Omnipresent does not require you" (Sifrei Bamidbar 95:2; Sanhedrin 17a).

Verse 27

וירץ הנער THERE RAN THE LAD — There are some who say that it was Gershom, the son of Moses (Midrash Tanchuma, Beha'alotcha 12).

Verse 28

כלאם — (This is taken as the equivalent of כַּלֵּם, "destroy them", "make an end of them"; cf. Rashi on Exodus 17:9) — He meant: cast upon them the responsibility for public affairs and they will of themselves soon come to an end (through the worry and anxiety this entails). — Another explanation is: that the word means put them into prison (כלא). He said this because they were prophesying, "Moses will die and Joshua will bring Israel into the Land" (cf. Sifrei Bamidbar 96; Sanhedrin 17a).

Verse 29

המקנא אתה לי means, "art thou envying where I should envy".
לי — the word לי meaning the same as בשבילי, "for my sake". Wherever an expression of the root קנא is used it implies that a person sets his heart on the matter, whether it be to take vengeance or to help; — emportement in O. F. (English = zeal) — he holds the thickest (heaviest) part of the load (i.e. he takes the responsibility for carrying out a matter).

Verse 30

ויאסף משה AND MOSES [AND THE ELDERS OF ISRAEL] RETIRED from the entrance of the appointed tent.
אל המחנה INTO THE CAMP — i.e. they each went into his tent in the camp....
ויאסף — אסף is a term for "bringing into the house", as, (Deuteronomy 22:2) "thou shalt bring it (ואספתו) into thine house", The passage that proves that this is so in all cases (lit., the father of all) is, (Psalms 39:7) "he heapeth up riches, and knoweth not who shall gather them in (אוספם)" (from which it is evident that אסף must denote not "gathering together" for this is implied in יצבר, but bringing it into one's house, taking possession of a thing). The fact that Scripture first relates that Moses and the elders entered their tents and afterwards that punishment fell upon the people teaches us that He (God) did not bring the punishment upon them before these righteous men had retired each into his tent (Sifrei Bamidbar 96).

Verse 31

וי״גז means “and he caused to fly”; similar is, (Psalms 90:10) “for it flies away (גז)”; so, also, (Nahum 1:12) “they shall fly off (נגוזו) and it shall pass away”.
וישט means “and he spread them abroad” (while flying), as (I Samuel 30:16) “and behold, they were spread abroad (נטושים) upon all the earth”; (Ezekiel 29:5) “and I have spread thee about (ונטשתיך) the wilderness”.
וכאמתים AND ABOUT TWO CUBITS [HIGH UPON THE FACE OF THE EARTH] — This means that they were flying at a height (of two cubits from the ground) so that they reached just up to a man’s breast, in order that there should be no trouble in gathering them, either to stretch upwards or to bend down to pick them up (Sifrei Bamidbar 97).

Verse 32

המעט means, HE THAT GATHERED LEAST of all — the indolent and the lame.
אסף עשרה חמרים GATHERED TEN HOMERS (Numbers 11:32) (Sifrei Bamidbar 98).
וישטחו means, they spread them out in numerous layers (Sifrei Bamidbar 98; Yoma 75b).

Verse 33

טרם יכרת Translate this as the Targum does: עד דלא פסק whilst it (the flesh, the supply of flesh) had not yet ceased. Another explanation is: one had not yet time to bite it through with his teeth before his soul departed (Sifrei Bamidbar 98).

Chapter 12

Verse 1

ותדבר AND [MIRIAM AND AARON] SPAKE — The term דבר in every passage where it is used implies harsh language, for so it states, (Genesis 42:30) “The man, the lord of the land spake (דבר) roughly to us”. The term אמר, however, is always an expression denoting supplication, for so it states, (Genesis 19:7) “And he said (ויאמר) ‘I beg of you (נא), my brethren, do not so wickedly” ; (verse 6 of this chapter) “And He said (ויאמר), Hear, I pray you (נא), My words’ — for the word נא always expresses supplication (Sifrei Bamidbar 99).
ותדבר מרים ואהרן AND MIRIAM AND AARON SPAKE — She opened the conversation, therefore Scripture mentions her first. And whence did Miriam know that Moses had separated himself from his wife (for this was the statement she made; cf. Rashi below)? R. Nathan answered: “Miriam was beside Zipporah When it was told to Moses, ‘Eldad and Medad are prophesying in the camp’ (Numbers 11:27). When Zipporah heard this, she exclaimed, Woe to the wives of these if they have anything to do with prophecy, for they will separate from their wives just has my husband has separated from me!” It was from this that Miriam knew about it, and she told it to Aaron. Now what was the case with Miriam who had no intention to disparage him? She was punished thus severely! How much the more will this be so in the case of one who intentionally speaks in disparagement of this fellow”! (Sifrei Bamidbar 99).
האשה הכשית THE CUSHITE WOMAN — This tells us that all agreed as to her beauty just as all agree as to the blackness of an Aethopian (cf. Sifrei Bamidbar 99).
כושית — The numerical value of this word (736) is the same as that of יפת מראה, a woman of beautiful appearance.
על אדות האשה BECAUSE OF THE [CUSHITE] WOMAN — because of her having been divorced by Moses (cf. Note on next passage).

כי אשה כשית לקח FOR HE HAD MARRIED A CUSHITE WOMAN — What is the force of this statement? (It appears superfluous; since על אדות וכו has been explained to refer to Moses having divorced his Cushite wife, it is unnecessary to state afterwards that he had married her)! But it is made to suggest the following: You may find a woman who is pleasant an account of her beauty but who is not pleasant by reason of her deeds (conduct); or one pleasant because of her conduct but not because of her beauty. This woman, however, was pleasant in every respect (Sifrei Bamidbar 99).
האשה הכשית THE CUSHITE WOMAN — Because of her beauty-she was called, "the Aethiopian" just as a man calls his handsome son "Moor", in order that the evil eye should have no power over him (Midrash Tanchuma, Tzav 13).
כי אשה כשית לקח THAT HE HAD MARRIED A CUSHITE (a beautiful) WOMAN, and had now divorced her.

Verse 2

הרק אך FOR HAS INDEED THE LORD SPOKEN with him alone.
הלא גם בנו HAS HE NOT ALSO [SPOKEN] WITH US, and we have not separated from our spouses! (Sifrei Bamidbar 100).

Verse 3

ענו means, humble and patient.

Verse 4

פתאם SUDDENLY — He revealed himself to them suddenly just when they were unclean as a result of marital intercourse, so that they cried; "Water, water!" (for purification). He did this to give them to understand that Moses had acted rightly in that he had separated from his wife, since the Shechinah used to reveal Itself to him at all times and there was no definite time fixed for the Divine communication (Midrash Tanchuma, Tzav 13).
צאו שלשתכם GO OUT YOU THREE [UNTO THE APPOINTED TENT] — This tells us that the names of all three of them were mentioned as one utterance, something that is impossible for a human mouth to articulate and a human ear to catch (Sifrei Bamidbar 102).

Verse 5

בעמוד ענן [AND THE LORD CAME DOWN] IN THE COLUMN OF THE CLOUD — He came alone to punish them, not as is the manner of human beings: when a human king goes to war, he goes with numerous troops, but when he goes forth peaceably, he goes forth with only a few. But the manner of the Holy One, blessed be He, is that He goes to war alone — as it is said, (Exodus 15:3) "The Lord alone is the man of war, but He goes forth for peace accompanied by His hosts, as it is said, (Psalms 68:18) "The chariots of God are twenty thousands, even thousands of angels of peace (שנאן)" (Sifrei Bamidbar 102).
ויקרא אהרן ומרים AND HE CALLED: "AARON AND MIRIAM!" — that they should proceed further, and go forth from the court towards God (more lit., the Divine Speech) (Sifrei Bamidbar 102).
ויצאו שניהם AND THEY BOTH WENT FORTH — And why did He bid them go further and so separate them from Moses? Because there is a rule that one should utter only a part of a man's good qualities in his presence, but that the whole of them should be told only in his absence. Similarly we find in the case of Noah, that in his absence (i.e. when Scripture speaks about him) it says of him: "a righteous and whole-hearted man" (Genesis 6:9), whilst in his presence (i.e. where God is speaking to Noah) it states, (Genesis 7:1) "for thee I have seen righteous before me", (and it does

not add: whole-hearted) (Sifrei Bamidbar 102). — Another explanation is: God bid only Aaron and Miriam to draw near in order that he (Moses) should not hear the reprimand administered to Aaron.

Verse 6

שמעו נא דברי HEAR, I PRAY YOU, MY WORDS — The word נא is always an expression of entreaty (Sifrei Bamidbar 103).
אם יהיה נביאכם means, IF THERE WOULD BE PROPHETS TO YOU (i.e. if you had a prophet — if you could show one to me).
ה׳ במראה אליו אתודע This means: the Shechinah (the Divine Glory) of my Name does not reveal Itself unto him in a "transparent glass" (i.e. a direct revelation), but in dreams and visions (cf. Sifrei Bamidbar 103).

Verse 7

Verse 8

פה אל פה MOUTH TO MOUTH [I HAVE SPOKEN WITH HIM] — I have Myself told him to separate from his wife. And where did I tell him this? On Sinai, when I said to him, (Deuteronomy 5:27 Deuteronomy 5:28) "Go, say to them (to the people), 'Get you into your tents (rejoin your wives). But as for thee, remain thou here by Me, [and I will speak unto thee]'" (Shabbat 87a; cf. Sifrei Bamidbar 103).
ומראה ולא בחידת AND IN A מראה AND NOT IN RIDDLES — When it says מראה, this refers to the clearness of the Divine communication, i.e. that I express My communication unto him in the clearest form in which it can be put and do not obscure it in riddles, as e.g. was the manner in which it was said to Ezekiel: (Ezekiel 17:2), "Put forth a riddle etc." — One might, however, think that it refers to the "appearance of the Shechinah" (i.e. that he saw God)! It, however, states, (Exodus 33:20) "Thou cannot see My face" (Sifrei Bamidbar 103).
ותמנת ה' יביט AND THE SIMILITUDE OF THE LORD DID HE BEHOLD — This refers to beholding the after-effects of God's Providence, just as it is stated, (Exodus 33:22 Exodus 33:23) "[And it shall be when My glory passeth by] thou shalt see what is behind Me" (Sifrei Bamidbar 103).
בעבדי במשה [WHY WERE YE NOT AFRAID TO SPEAK] AGAINST MY SERVANT, AGAINST MOSES — It does not state "against My servant Moses", but "against My servant, against Moses", which suggests: why were ye not afraid to speak against My servant, even though he were not a Moses; and why were ye not afraid to speak against a Moses — even though he were not My servant — in either of these cases you ought to have feared him! How much the more ought you to be afraid to speak against him (Moses) he being also My servant — and the servant of a king is a king (a noble person) himself! You should have said: The King does not love him without reason! — But if you reply that I am not cognizant of his doings (i. e. that I love him though he does not deserve it, since I am not aware of his treatment of his wife) — then this statement is even worse than your previous one (Midrash Tanchuma, Tzav 13; cf. Sifrei Bamidbar 103).

Verse 9

ויחר אף ה׳ בם וילך AND THE WRATH OF THE LORD GLOWED AGAINST THEM; AND HE WENT AWAY — Only after He had informed them of their offence did He decree "excommunication' against them. All the more so should a human being not display anger against his fellow before he informs him of his offense (Sifrei Bamidbar 104).

Verse 10

והענן סר AND THE CLOUD DEPARTED, and only afterwards, ומרים מצרעת כשלג BEHOLD, MIRIAM BECAME LEPROUS, WHITE AS SNOW. A parable! This may be compared to a king who said to his son's tutor, "Chastise my son, but do not do so until I go away from you, because I feel pity for him" (Sifrei Bamidbar 105).

Verse 11

נואלנו — Understand this as the Targum does: (we have acted foolishly); it is associated in meaning with אויל "a fool".

Verse 12

אל נא תהי LET NOT our sister BE —
כמת AS ONE WHO IS DEAD — Aaron said this because a leper may be regarded as dead. How is it in the case of a corpse? It makes one unclean through entering a room in which it lies, So too, does the leper make a person unclean through his entering the place where he is (cf. Sifrei Bamidbar 105).
אשר בצאתו מרחם אמו It ought to have stated "אמנו" "of our mother's womb", only that Scripture modified the expression. Similarly חצי בשרו — it ought to have said חצי בשרנו "the half of our flesh is consumed", only that Scripture modified the expression (Scripture uses these expressions with the suffix of the third person singular instead of the first person plural, because it wishes to avoid an ominous expression referring to Aaron and Moses). — The meaning is: Since she came forth from the womb of our own mother she in her present state is to us as though the half of our flesh were consumed. It is the same idea as is expressed in the words, (Genesis 37:27) "for he is our brother, our own flesh" (Sifrei Bamidbar 105). — And even according to what the text literally implies (without assuming any modification) it appears to have that meaning: "It is not right for a brother to allow his sister to remain as a dead person".
אשר בצאתו — since he (the dead person) also come out of the womb of the mother of this man who possessed the power to help him and does not help him, — then, indeed, the half of his own flesh becomes consumed if the other perishes, since one's brother is one's own flesh. — Another explanation of אל נא תהי כמת in the sense of "Do not let her remain a leper" is: If you (Moses) do not heal her by your prayer, who will put her in quarantine as a leper (cf. Leviticus 13:4) who will ultimately declare her clean? It is impossible for me to examine her as to the character of her leprosy, since I am a near relative and a near relative may not examine the leprous plagues of his kin, (Sifrei Bamidbar 105; cf. Mishnah Negaim 2:5) and there is no other priest in The world who is not her relative. This is alluded to in the words אשר כצאתו מרחם אמו — "since he (the only person who could declare her clean) has come out of the same womb".

Verse 13

אל נא רפא נא לה HEAL HER NOW, O GOD, I BESEECH THEE — Scripture intends to teach you by this form of prayer the correct attitude in social life — that if one is asking a favour of his fellow man he should first say two or three words of supplication and then solicit the favour (Sifrei Bamidbar 105).
לאמר SAYING (more lit., to say, i.e. that he should say) — What is the force of this word? It means "to say" i.e. that God should say, viz., he (Moses) said to Him, "Answer me whether you are going to heal her or

not", — until at length He replied: "If her father had but spit in her face etc." Rabbi Eleazer, the son of Azariah, said: In four instances Moses asked the Holy One, blessed be He, to tell him whether He would fulfil his request or not. Similar to the case here is, (Exodus 6:12): "And Moses spoke before the Lord, saying, "[Behold, the children of Israel have not hearkened unto me; how then shall Pharaoh hearken to me]". What is the force of the word לאמר? — "Answer me whether you will redeem them or not". Until at length the Lord said unto him, (Exodus 6:1) "Now shalt thou see [What I will do to Pharaoh]". Similar to this is: (Numbers 27:15—18) "and Moses spake unto the Lord, saying, 'Let the Lord, the God of the spirits of all flesh set a man [over the congregation]'". He answered him, "Take thee [Joshua the son of Nun, etc.]". Similar to this is: (Deuteronomy 3:23—26) "And I besought the Lord at that time, saying, [O Lord, God, thou hast begun to show thy servant thy greatness]', the Lord replied: "Let it suffice" (Sifrei Bamidbar 105).
רפא נא לה HEAL HER, I PRAY THEE — Why did Moses not pray at length? In order that Israel should not say: His sister is in trouble, and he stands and offers long prayers! (Sifrei Bamidbar 105). — [Another explanation is: He did not pray at length so that Israel should not say: On behalf of his sister he prays long, but on our behalf he would offer no long prayer].

Verse 14

ואביה ירק ירק בפניה IF HER FATHER HAD BUT SPIT IN HER FACE — i.e. if he had shown her an angry face (if he was offended with her), הלא תכלם שבעת ימים SHOULD SHE NOT BE PUT TO SHAME FOR SEVEN DAYS? — It follows therefore à fortiori with respect to the Shechinah (i.e. in the case where God rebukes her in such a stern way) that she ought to be put to shame for fourteen days!) But since there is a rule דין לבא מן הדין להיות כנדון "It is sufficient for a law that is derived by a conclusion a fortiori (הבא מן הדין) to be only as strict as the law from which it is derived (נדון), and not go beyond it, therefore even as a consequence of My reprimand, תסגר שבעת ימים LET HER BE SHUT OUT [FROM THE CAMP] SEVEN DAYS only (Sifrei Bamidbar 106; Bava Kamma 25a).
ואחר תאסף AND AFTER THAT LET HE BE GATHERED IN AGAIN — I say that all the different forms of the root אסף which are employed in reference to lepers (cf. e. g. 2 Kings 5:6, 11) are used because he (the leper) is sent forth from the camp and when he becomes healed he is taken again into the camp; — on this account it uses of him the term אסיפה, which has the meaning of "taking in" something that was outside.

Verse 15

והעם לא נסע AND THE PEOPLE JOURNEYED NOT [TILL MIRIAM WAS BROUGHT IN] — This honour the Omnipresent showed her as a reward for the single hour she tarried for Moses' sake when he was thrown into the river, as it is said, (Exodus 2:4) "And his sister placed herself afar off (i. e. she waited) [to know what would be done to him]" (Sotah 9b).

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Chapter 13

Verse 1

Verse 2

שלח לך אנשים SEND THOU MEN — Why is the section dealing with the spies put in juxtaposition with the section dealing with Miriam's punishment? To show the grievousness of the spies' sin: because she (Miriam) was punished on account of the slander which she uttered against her brother, and these sinners witnessed it and yet they did not take a lesson from her (Midrash Tanchuma, Sh'lach 5).
שלח לך SEND THEE (more lit., for thyself) — i.e. according to your own judgement: I do not command you, but if you wish to do so send them. — God said this because the Israelites came to Moses and said. "We will send men before us etc.", as it is said, (Deuteronomy 1:22): "And you approached me, all of you, [saying, We will send men, etc.]", and Moses took counsel with the Shechinah (the Lord), whereupon He said to them, I have told them long ago that it (the land) is good, as it is said, (Exodus 3:17): "I will bring you up out of the affliction of Egypt … [unto a land flowing with milk and honey]". By their lives! I swear that I will give them now an opportunity to fall into error through the statements of the spies, so that they should not come into possession of it (the land) (Sotah 34b; cf. also Rashi on Sotah 34b:8 מדעתך and Midrash Tanchuma, Sh'lach 5).

Verse 3

על פי ה' With His consent; i.e. that He did not prevent him from doing so....
כלם אנשים ALL OF THEM WERE MEN — Wherever the term אנשים, "men", is used in Scripture it is a term denoting worthiness. These men, [though they later sinned] but at that time [when they were appointed] they were worthy men.

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Verse 15

Verse 16

ויקרא משה להושע וגו׳ AND MOSES CALLED HOSHEA [THE SON OF NUN JEHOSHUA] — By giving him this name יהושע which is a compound of יה and הושע "God may save", he in effect prayed for him: "May God save you from the evil counsel of the spies" (Sotah 34b).

Verse 17

עלו זה בנגב GO UP THIS WAY SOUTHWARD — It (the South) was the worst part of the Land of Israel. He bid them spy this out first because such is the way of merchants: they show a prospective purchaser the inferior goods first, and afterwards they show the best (Midrash Tanchuma, Sh'lach 6).

Verse 18

את הארץ מה הוא AND SEE THE LAND; WHAT IT IS — There are countries which rear strong people and there are countries which rear weak people; there are such as produce a large population and there are such as produce a small population (Midrash Tanchuma, Sh'lach 6).
החזק הוא הרפה WHETHER THEY ARE STRONG OR WEAK — He gave them a sign: if they live in open cities they are strong, since they evidently rely on their own strength, but if they live in fortified cities they are weak (Midrash Tanchuma, Sh'lach 6).

Verse 19

הבמחנים — The Targum rendering is: "whether in open places" i.e. in cities open and exposed — without a wall.
הטובה הוא WHETHER IT IS GOOD, through possessing springs and other good and healthy supplies of water.

Verse 20

היש בה עץ WHETHER THERE ARE TREES IN IT [OR NOT] — i.e. whether there is a righteous man amongst them who will protect them by his merits (cf. Bava Batra 15a).

בכורי ענבים — [AND THE DAYS WERE THE DAYS OF] THE FIRSTLING OF THE GRAPES — i.e. the days when the grapes were ripening at its early stage of growth.

Verse 21

ממדבר צן עד רחב לבא חמת [SO THEY WENT UP AND SEARCHED THE LAND] FROM THE DESERT OF ZIN UNTO REHOB, AS MEN COME TO HAMATH — They went along its (the Land's) boundaries lengthwise and broadwise in the form of a gamma (the third letter of the Greek alphabet, Γ), viz., they went along the side which forms the southern boundary from its eastern corner to the western corner, just as Moses had bidden them, (v. 17) "Go up this way southwards", i.e. the way of the south border from its eastern Point up to the Mediterranean Sea, for the Sea is the western boundary of the Land. From there they turned and went along the entire western boundary on the sea-coast up to the point whence one goes on to Hamath which is situated near Mount Hor in the North-western corner, as is set forth in the section dealing with the "boundaries of the Land" in the Sedrah אלה מסעי (Numbers 34:7—8).

Verse 22

ויבא עד חברון [AND THEY WENT UP BY THE SOUTH] AND HE CAME UNTO HEBRON — Caleb alone went there and prostrated himself on the graves of the Patriarchs, offering prayer that he might be helped not to give way to the enticement of his colleagues and join them in their counsel. You may see that it was Caleb who went there, for so indeed it (Scripture) states, (Deuteronomy 1:36) "[Save Caleb the son of Jephunnch, he shall see it] and unto him will I give the land upon which he hath trodden!" and it is written, (Judges 1:20) "And they gave Hebron unto Caleb" (Sotah 34b)

שבע שנים נבנתה [NOW HEBRON] WAS BUILT SEVEN YEARS [BEFORE ZOAN IN EGYPT] — Is it possible that Ham (who was the father of both Canaan and Mizraim; cf. Genesis 10:6) would have built Hebron for Canaan, his younger son, before he built Zoan for Mizraim, his elder son? But the meaning is that it was furnished (lit., built up) with all excellencies seven times better than Zoan. It (Scripture), by mentioning this, means to tell you the excellency of the Land of Israel. For you have no rockier ground in the Land of Israel than Hebron, — for this reason, indeed, they set it apart for a place of burial — and there is, on the other hand, no soil in any country as good as that of Egypt, for it states, (Genesis 13:10) "like the garden of the Lord, viz., like the Land of Egypt". Now Zoan must have been the best part in the land Egypt since the residence of the kings was there, as it is said, (Jes. 30:4) "For in Zoan were its princes", and yet Hebron was seven times better than it (Sotah 34b; Ketuvot 112a).

Verse 23

זמורה (lit., AND THEY CUT DOWN FROM THENCE) A BRANCH [AND ONE CLUSTER OF GRAPES] — i.e. a vine branch with a cluster of grapes hanging from it (not as the text might suggest, that they cut a branch and they cut also a cluster of grapes),

וישאהו במוט בשנים AND THEY BARE IT UPON A POLE BETWEEN TWO — From what is implied in the statement "And they bare it upon a pole", do I not know that it was carried by two men"? why then does it add the word בשנים? It means, not as you assume, "by two men" but "upon two poles". How was that done? Eight of the spies bore the cluster of grapes. Besides these, one spy took the fig and one the pomegranate, but Joshua and Caleb did not take anything (although all of them were bidden to do so; cf. v. 20),

because the very essence of their (the other spies') intention was only to bring an evil report: "Just as its fruit is extraordinary in size, so is its people extraordinary in size". — Now if you wish to know how much was the burden of each of them, go and learn from the weight of the stones which they erected at Gilgal; for it is related (Joshua 4:5 and 20) that each man lifted by himself one stone from out of the Jordan on to his shoulder, and set it up at Gilgal; — and our Rabbis ascertained the weight of each stone to be forty Seahs, and it is an accepted fact that a load which a person can by himself lift up on to his shoulder is only the third of the load he can carry if people assist him in lifting it up (Sotah 34b).

Verse 24

Verse 25

וישבו מתור הארץ מקץ ארבעים יום AND THEY RETURNED FROM THE SEARCHING OF THE LAND AT THE END OF FORTY DAYS — But surely it was four hundred Parsangs (Persian miles) by four hundred Parsangs (Megillah 3a). And the journey of an average man is ten Parsangs a day (Pesachim 94a) and consequently it was a distance of forty days from east to west alone, whilst they traveled during that period along its length and breadth! But the fact is that it was manifest before the Holy One, blessed be He, that He would make a decree against them, "a day for a year" (cf. Numbers 14:34), therefore He shortened the road for them (i. e. He made them cover ground rapidly) (Midrash Tanchuma, Sh'lach 8).

Verse 26

וילכו ויבאו AND THEY WENT AND CAME [TO MOSES] — What is the force of "they went" (we have been informed that they had returned; why afterwards make any reference to their going on the journey)? It is intended to compare their "going" with their "coming" to Moses! How was their coming to Moses? With an evil plan! So, too, was their "going" on the journey with an evil plan (i.e. that when they were travelling they had already resolved to bring back an evil report)! (Sotah 35a).
וישיבו אתם דבר AND THEY BROUGHT BACK WORD UNTO THEM — unto Moses and Aaron (for the Congregation is mentioned separately).

Verse 27

זבת חלב ודבש [WE CAME INTO THE LAND … AND SURELY] IT FLOWETH WITH MILK AND HONEY — They stated this because no fabricated statement in which one does not say at least some true words at first can in the end be maintained (Sotah 35a).

Verse 28

בצרות is an expression for strength. Its rendering in the Targum is כריכן, a term for circular fortresses, for in the Aramaic language כריך means round.

Verse 29

עמלק יושב וגו׳ THE AMALEKITES ABIDE [IN THE LAND OF THE SOUTH] — Because they had already been "burnt" by Amalek, the spies mentioned him first in order to terrify them (cf. Midrash Tanchuma, Sh'lach 9).

ועל ידי הירדן AND BY THE יד OF THE JORDAN — יד means what it literally implies: beside the Jordan. They meant: the Canaanites live on the bank of the Jordan and therefore you will be unable to cross it.

Verse 30

ויהס כלב AND CALEB STILLED [THE PEOPLE] — he caused all of them to be silent.
אל משה means he silenced them that they should hear what he was going to say about Moses. He cried aloud saying: "Is this the only thing the son of Amram has done to us?!" — One who heard him thus speaking believed that he was about to speak to his disparagement, and because they had something in their mind against Moses through the spies' statements, all of them kept silent to hear his disparagement. He, however, said: "Did he not divide the Red Sea for us, and bring down the Manna for us, and collect the quails for us?!" (Sotah 35a).
עלה נעלה WE CAN INDEED GO UP — even to heaven, if he were to say "Make ladders and go up there", we should listen to him because we would be successful in all his words (in all he bids us do) (Sotah 35a).
ויהס is an expression denoting silence. Similar is, (Zechariah 2:17) "Be silent, (הס) O all flesh"; (Amos 6:10) "Be silent (הס): for we may not mention [the name of the Lord]". So is the manner of people: he who wishes to silence a group of men says "sst" (This sibilant sound is therefore used to command silence).

Verse 31

חזק הוא ממנו [FOR] THEY ARE STRONGER ממנו — They said this, — if this were at all possible (i.e. if one may be permitted to say so of God) — with reference to the Omnipresent (ממנו, stronger than "He", they thus uttered blasphemy) (Sotah 35a; Arakhin 15a).

Verse 32

אכלת יושביה [A LAND] THAT EATETH UP THE INHABITANTS THEREOF — "In every place which we passed we found them (the inhabitants) burying their dead". — But, as a matter of fact, the Holy One, blessed be He, did this (caused many deaths amongst them at that time, and so the Canaanites were engaged in burying their dead) for the best, in order to occupy them busily with their mourning so that they should pay no attention to these (the spies) (Sotah 35a).
אנשי מדות MEN OF GREAT STATURE (lit., of measure) — tall and high men, in speaking of whom one feels compelled to give their size, as is stated, for instance, with reference to Goliath (I Samuel 17:4): "his height was six cubits and a span". Similar to this phrase are: (II Samuel 21:20) "a man of great stature"; (I Chronicles 11:23) "a man of great stature.

Verse 33

הנפילים (lit., the fallen ones) — Anakim who were descendants of Shemchazai and Azael who fell from heaven in the generation of Enosh (cf. Targum Jonathan on Genesis 6:4 and Rashi on Niddah 61a s. v. בני אחיה).
וכן היינו בעיניהם AND SO WE MUST HAVE BEEN IN THEIR EYES — We heard them say one to another; "There are ants in the vineyards that look like human beings (Sotah 35a).
ענק — They were thus called because it seemed as if the sun was draped around their necks (מַעֲנִיקִים) because of their height (Sotah 34b).

Chapter 14

Verse 1

כל העדה ALL THE CONGREGATION — This refers to the Sanhedrin (Midrash Tanchuma, Sh'lach 12; cf. Rashi on Leviticus 4:13 and Note thereon).

Verse 2

לו מתנו means WOULD THAT WE HAD DIED.

Verse 3

Verse 4

נתנה ראש LET US MAKE A CAPTAIN — Understand this as the Targum does: Let us appoint a chief — i.e. let us set a king over us. But our Rabbis explain the word ראש to denote idol-worship (i.e. that they intended to turn to idolatry) (cf. Sanhedrin 107a).

Verse 5

Verse 6

Verse 7

Verse 8

Verse 9

אל תמרדו [ONLY] REBEL NOT YE [AGAINST THE LORD], and consequently ואתם אל תיראו YOU WILL NOT HAVE TO FEAR [THE PEOPLE OF THE LAND].
כי לחמנו הם FOR THEY ARE BREAD FOR US — i.e. we shall consume them as bread.
סר צלם THEIR DEFENSE (lit., shade) IS DEPARTED [FROM THEM] — i.e. their shield and their strength is departed from them: the virtuous among them are dead; one of them was Job, who had protected them by his righteousness (Sotah 35a; cf. Bava Batra 15a). [Another explanation is: the shade (protection) of the Omnipresent is departed from them]. (Cf. Psalms 121:5).

Verse 10

לרגום אתם [BUT ALL THE CONGREGATION BADE] TO OVERWHELM THEM WITH STONES — them viz., Joshua and Caleb.
וכבוד ה׳ AND THE GLORY OF THE LORD [APPEARED IN THE APPOINTED TENT] — i.e. the cloud descended there (Sotah 35a).

Verse 11

עד אנה means HOW LONG (while אנה is used of place — "where", עד אנה denotes time - "until when").
ינאצני means [HOW LONG] WILL THEY PROVOKE ME TO ANGER.
בכל האתות FOR ALL THE SIGNS — This means: On account of all the signs which I have done for them they ought to have believed that I possess the ability to fulfill My promise.

Verse 12

ואורישנו is an expression for "driving out" (here, driving out from the world, destroying). — And if you ask what I will do regarding the oath I have sworn to the Patriarchs (viz., to give the Land to their children; cf. Exodus 6:3—4), then I reply:
ואעשה אתך לגוי גדול I WILL MAKE OF THEE A GREAT NATION — [whereby My oath will be fulfilled] since you are one of their descendants (cf. Midrash Tanchuma, Sh'lach 13).

Verse 13

ושמעו מצרים WHEN THE EGYPTIANS SHALL HEAR IT — i.e. when they hear how you are killing them, [as stated in the previous verse].
כי העלית — The word כי here is used in the sense of אשר, "that", and the meaning is: they have seen that Thou broughtest them forth in Thy great strength from their midst, and when they hear that Thou art killing them they will not say that it is because they have sinned against Thee, but they will say that against them Thou wast able to fight, but against the in habitants of the Land of Canaan, however, Thou wast unable to fight; and this is the meaning of —

Verse 14

ואמרו אל יושב הארץ which is the same as על יושב הארץ THEY WILL SAY CONCERNING THE INHABITANTS OF THIS LAND — What will they say concerning them? That which is stated at the end of the paragraph, (v. 16):
מבלתי יכולת ה' "Because the Lord was unable etc. … [he hath slaughtered them in the wilderness]". — The connection between that verse and what preceeds is as follows: Because they have heard that Thou, O Lord, dwellest in their midst and that Thou appearest to them face to face and all this is in an affectionate manner (i.e. all this is evidence of the affection in which Thou holdest them), and until now they had not realized that Your love for them had been withdrawn.

Verse 15

והמתה את העם הזה כאיש אחד IF THOU PUTTEST TO DEATH ALL THIS PEOPLE AS ONE MAN — i.e. suddenly; then, because of this the nations who have heard the fame of Thee [will say as follows]:

Verse 16

מבלתי יכלת וגו׳ BECAUSE THE LORD IS UNABLE etc., — "He is unable to bring them into the land on Canaan because the inhabitants of the land are strong and mighty; and besides, one king, Pharaoh, is not like thirty-one kings, who inhabit Canaan". — This is what they will say concerning the inhabitants of this land (these kings): מבלתי יכלת because He had no power to bring them into the Land He hath slaughtered them (Midrash Tanchuma, Sh'lach 13).
יכלת is a noun form.

Verse 17

(יגדל נא כח ה' — LET THE STRENGTH OF MY LORD BE GREAT — by fulfilling Your statement.)
כאשר דברת לאמר ACCORDING AS THOU HAST SPOKEN, SAYING — And what is the utterance which Thou hast spoken?

Verse 18

ה' אֶרֶךְ אַפַּיִם "The Lord is long suffering" towards both the righteous and the wicked. When Moses ascended to Heaven to receive the Law he found the Holy One, blessed be He, engaged in writing: "The Lord is long-suffering". He asked, "Surely only to the righteous?" The Holy One, blessed be He, answered him, "To the wicked also!" Whereupon Moses said: "The wicked — let them perish!" He (the Lord) replied to him: "I swear by your life that you shall eventually need this thing (the extension of My mercy also to the wicked)". When the Israelites sinned at the incident of the Golden Calf and at that of the spies, Moses offered prayer before Him, with mention of God's attribute of ארך אפים (of His being long suffering). The Holy One, blessed be He, then said to him: Did you not say, "Surely only to the righteous!?" Whereupon Moses replied, "But did You not tell me, 'To the wicked also'?" Let then — Moses added — the strength of My Lord be great [even as Thou didst say] — by fulfilling Thy statement and not mine! (Sanhedrin 111a).
ונקה AND HE CLEARS those who repent,
לא ינקה BUT DOES NOT CLEAR those who do not repent (Yoma 86a; cf. Onkelos and Rashi on Exodus 34:7).

Verse 19

Verse 20

כדברך [I HAVE FORGIVEN] ACCORDING TO THY WORD — i.e. because of what you have said, "Lest they say: 'Because the Lord was unable, etc.'".

Verse 21

ואולם BUT, means, (I will not slay them), but this will I do unto them (what is mentioned in v. 22 ff.).
חי אני AS TRULY AS I LIVE — This is the formula of an oath: Just as it is true that I live and that all the earth is filled with My glory, so, indeed, will I fulfil regarding them My threat "that all the men who have seen etc.". [אם יראו את הארץ — This verse is out of order: Its connection with what precedes it is as follows: As truly as I live, I swear that all the men who have seen My glory etc. shall not see the Land, "and yet My Glory shall fill the earth", since My Name will not become profaned through this plague which I proposed to bring upon them by people stating: "Because the Lord is unable to bring them into the Land etc." since I shall not then be killing them suddenly, as one man (v. 15), but during a prolonged period of forty years — little by little].

Verse 22

וינסו— Take the passage as what it literally implies: AND THEY HAVE TESTED [ME].
זה עשר פעמים TEN TIMES — twice at the Red Sea, twice in the case of the "Manna", twice in the case of the "quails" etc., as is to be found in the Treatise Arakhin 15a.

Verse 23

אם יראו means THAT THEY SHALL NOT SEE.
לא יראוה THEY SHALL NOT SEE IT — i. e. they shall not see the land.

Verse 24

רוח אחרת [BUT MY SERVANT CALEB, BECAUSE HE HAD] ANOTHER SPIRIT [WITH HIM] — The word "another' suggests that he was filled with a twofold spirit — the one to which he gave utterance (lit., one in his mouth), and another which he concealed in his heart. To the spies he said, "I am with you in your counsel", whilst in his heart he had the intention to tell the truth, and it was only on this account that he possessed the power to silence them (the people), as it is said, (Numbers 13:30) "And Caleb silenced [the people concerning Moses]" (cf. Rashi on that verse), for they thought that he would say the same as themselves (as the spies). It is this that is alluded to in the Book of Joshua (Joshua 14:7) where it states that Caleb said "And I brought him (Moses) word again as it was in my heart" — but not as it was in my mouth (i.e. not what I had said to the spies) (Midrash Tanchuma, Sh'lach 10).
וימלא אחרי AND HE HATH FOLLOWED ME FULLY (lit., he hath filled to go after Me) — i.e. he hath filled his heart with the intention to follow Me; — this is an elliptical sentence (the word "his heart" is omitted).
אשר בא שמה [HIM WILL I BRING UNTO THE LAND] WHEREUNTO HE WENT — Hebron shall be given to him (cf. Rashi on v. 22).
יורשנה — Understand this as the Targum does: "and his seed shall drive it (the population of the land) out" i. e. shall drive out the Anakim and the other people that are in it. — One should not give the rendering ירתינה, "they will possess it", in the Targum except in place of the Hebrew יִירָשֶׁנָּה (in the Kal, whilst the Hiphil, as here, denotes to drive out).

Verse 25

והעמלקי וגו׳ AND THE AMALEKITES [AND THE CANAANITES DWELL IN THE VALLEY] — This is not a mere statement that they dwell there; it is a warning: If you go there they will kill you, since I shall not be with you.
מחר פנו TOMORROW TURN YOU — i.e. turn backwards, וסעו לכם AND JOURNEY [INTO THE DESERT etc.].

Verse 26

Verse 27

לעדה הרעה וגו׳ [HOW LONG SHALL I BEAR] WITH THIS EVIL CONGREGATION — This refers to the spies (not to the whole congregation); from here we learn that an עדה, "a congregation" is technically a gathering of at least ten persons (Megillah 23b).
אשר המה מלינים [THIS EVIL CONGREGATION] WHICH MAKE the Israelites MURMUR עלי AGAINST ME.
את תלנות בני ישראל אשר המה THE MURMURINGS OF THE CHILDREN OF ISRAEL WHICH THEY, the spies, מלינים MAKE them MURMUR עלי, AGAINST ME, שמעתי I HAVE HEARD.

Verse 28

חי אני AS TRULY AS I LIVE — This is a formula of taking an oath: If I do not do so, then — if this were at all possible to say of God — I do not live.
כאשר דברתם AS YE HAVE SPOKEN … [YOUR CARCASSES WILL FALL IN THE WILDERNESS] — because you made the request of Me: "Would that we had died in this wilderness" (Numbers 14:2).

Verse 29

וכל פקדיכם לכל מספרכם AND ALL OF YOU THAT WERE NUMBERED IN ANY COUNTING OF YOU — i.e. all that are numbered of you in any census (מספר) in which you are numbered, as, for instance, on going to or coming back from war, or when giving the shekels: all who are numbered in all these censuses shall die, and these are, everyone מבן עשרים שנה וגו׳ FROM TWENTY YEARS OLD AND UPWARDS — The age is expressly mentioned to exclude the tribe of Levi because those who were numbered of them were not from twenty years old and upwards (but they were either numbered from one month old — cf. Numbers 3:40, or from thirty years old; Numbers 4:3) (Bava Batra 121b).

Verse 30

Verse 31

Verse 32

ופגריכם אתם — Understand this as the Targum does: ("But your carcasses — those of you — they shall fall in this desert"). Because in the previous verse He said of the children that He would bring them into the Land, and it wishes to state now: "but you will die", this idiom is appropriate here — to say the word אתם (in addition to the personal suffix in פגריכם, in order to stress the contrast).

Verse 33

ארבעים שנה [AND YOUR CHILDREN SHALL WANDER IN THE DESERT] FORTY YEARS — None of them was to die younger than 60 years old (Bava Batra 121b). For this reason a period of forty years was decreed for their wanderings in order that those who were at that time 20 years old (and only those from twenty years old and upwards came under this decree; cf. v. 29) should reach the age of sixty (the average age of man; cf. Moed Katan 28a and Tosefta Yoma 4:10. s. v. ומיתה). The first year that they were in the wilderness was included in the forty although it preceded the sending forth of the spies (which took place in the second year), because from the moment they made the Golden Calf this decree entered the mind of God, but He waited for them (postponed their punishment) until their measure of sin should be full. This is the meaning of what is stated, (Exodus 32:34) "And in the day when I shall visit — viz., at the incident of the spies — I shall visit their sin (that of the Golden Calf) upon them". And, here, indeed, it states, (v. 34) "ye shall bear your iniquities" (in the plural) suggesting two sins; that of the Calf and that of the murmuring. — In the calculation it (Scripture) regards in the years of their lives a part of the year (of the sixtieth year) as the whole of it, and as soon as they entered their sixtieth year those who were now twenty years old died (Tanchuma 4:4:13).

ונשאו את זנותיכם AND SHALL BEAR YOUR WHOREDOMS — Understand this as the Targum does: and they shall bear your guilt (cf. Targum on ונשא את עונה, Numbers 30:16, and Rashi on that verse).

Verse 34

את תנואתי [AND YE SHALL KNOW] את תנואתי — You shall know (realise) that you have removed your heart from following after Me. תנואה is an expression for "removing", similar to (Numbers 30:6) "for her father hath removed her (הניא) from her vow" (cf. Rashi on that verse, where he quotes this phrase).

Verse 35

Verse 36

וישבו וילינו עליו [AND THE MEN WHOM MOSES SENT TO SEARCH THE LAND] RETURNED AND MADE THE WHOLE CONGREGATION MURMUR AGAINST HIM — This meant: "the men whom Moses sent and who, when they returned (וישבו) from searching the Land, made the whole congregation murmur against him by making them utter an evil report, — those men died. Wherever the phrase הוציא דבה occurs it denotes instructing to speak — that people teach their way of speaking to a person that he may speak it (cf. Rashi on 23:31). Similar is, (Song 7:10) "causing the lips of those who are asleep to speak." (דובב) There may be one (a דבה, "an utterance") for good, or there may be one for evil: and it is for this reason that it states here, "[even those men] that made the people utter evil speech about the Land", because, as I have stated, there is a דבה which may be termed good. דבה is parlerie in O. F.; (Engl = utterance).

Verse 37

במגפה לפני ה׳ [EVEN THOSE MEN DIED …] BY THE PLAGUE BEFORE THE LORD — by that death which was fitting for them — measure for measure. They had sinned with their tongue, therefore their tongue grew long extending right down to their navels, and worms came from their tongue and entered their navels. This is the reason why it states, they died by "the" plague, and not בְּמַגֵּפָה by "a" plague; this, too, is the meaning of the words "before the Lord" (they died by the plague which was before the Lord) — by that plague which was fitting for them according to the methods of the Holy One, blessed be He, Who metes out "measure for measure" (Sotah 35a).

Verse 38

ויהושע וכלב... חיו וגו׳ AND JOSHUA AND CALEB LIVED [FROM THOSE MEN] etc. — What is the force of חיו מן האנשים ההם (does it not state later on, Numbers 26:65, ''And there was not left a man of them save Caleb the son of Yephuneh and Joshua the son of Nun)"? But the phrase teaches that they received the portion of the spies in the Land and thus remained alive, so to speak, in their stead (i.e. the text does not intend to state that they alone of all those men remained alive, but that they lived "from" the other men, i.e. from their portion in the Land) (Bava Batra 118b).

Verse 39

Verse 40

אל ראש ההר [AND THEY … WENT UP] INTO THE TOP OF THE MOUNTAIN — that is the route that leads up to the Land of Israel.
הננו ועלינו אל המקום LO, WE ARE HERE, AND WILL GO UP INTO THE PLACE, viz., to the Land of Israel,
אשר אמר ה׳ WHICH THE LORD HATH PROMISED to give us; thither will we go up, (and we will not return to Egypt).
כי חטאנו FOR WE HAVE SINNED in that we said, (v. 3) "were it not better for us to return to Egypt?"

Verse 41

והיא לא תצלח AND IT SHALL NOT PROSPER — What you are about to do will not be successful.

Verse 42

Verse 43

כי על כן שבתם — means: for (כי) this will come upon you, because (על כן) ye have turned away etc. (cf. Rashi on Genesis 18:5 and Numbers 10:31).

Verse 44

ויעפלו is an expression for "strength" (doing a thing by insolent force). Similar is, (Habakkuk 2:4) "Behold it is insolent (עפלה)", engres in O. F., an expression for insolent force. Similar also is, (Micah 4:8), "stronghold (עפל) of the daughter of Zion"; (Jes. 32:14) "the forts (עפל) and towers". The Midrash Tanchuma 4:4:19, however, explains it (ויעפלו) to be of the same meaning as אופל, darkness, i.e. they went in darkness — without permission.

Verse 45

ויכתום AND COMPLETELY DISCOMFITED THEM — This word is the same in meaning as (Deuteronomy 9:21) "and I pounded it (ואכות) and ground it very thin". The text implies: blow upon blow.
עד החרמה EVEN UNTO HORMAH — The place was so called (חרמה doom, destruction) on account of what happened there.

Chapter 15

Verse 1

Verse 2

כי תבאו WHEN YE ARE COME [INTO THE LAND] — He brought them the good tidings that they would enter the land.

Verse 3

ועשיתם אשה — This is not a command: when you come into the land you shall make a fire-offering — but the meaning is: When you will come there and it enters your mind to make a fire-offering unto the Lord.
לפלא נדר או בנדבה וגו׳ TO DISTINGUISH YOURSELVES BY A VOW OR A FREE-WILL OFFERING [OR ON YOUR FESTIVALS] — i.e. or that you would make the fire-offering on account of the obligatory festival sacrifice which I have obligated you to offer on a festival....
ריח ניחח [TO MAKE] A PLEASING ODOR — i.e. to cause satisfaction to Me.

Verse 4

והקריב המקריב THEN SHALL HE THAT OFFERETH [HIS OFFERING BRING A MEAL OFFERING etc.] — i.e. you shall offer a drink-offering and a meal-offering for each and every animal: the meal-offering to be entirely burnt, and the oil be mingled with it, and the wine to be put into the basins from which it was poured upon the altar (but see Tosafot on Sukkah 48a), as we have learnt in Treatise Sukkah 48a.

Verse 5

לכבש האחד FOR EACH LAMB — It (this phrase) refers to all that is mentioned above — to the meal-offering, and the oil and the wine (not only to the wine last mentioned; the prescribed measures of flour, oil, and wine are to accompany each lamb).

Verse 6

או לאיל OR FOR A RAM [THOU SHALT PREPARE etc.] — This means: and if it be a ram [thou shalt prepare, etc.]". Our Rabbis, however, have interpreted the word "או," "or", as being intended to bring also the פלגס (a lamb beyond the age of a כבש and below that of an איל) under the law of the drink-offerings prescribed for a ram (i.e. that the animal in its intermediate age is regarded as full grown as regards the נסכים) (Chullin 23a; Menachot 91b).

Verse 7

Verse 8

Verse 9

Verse 10

אשה ריח FOR A FIRE OFFERING OF [PLEASING] ODOUR — This refers only to the meal-offering and the oil mentioned in v. 9, but the wine is not a fire-offering, since it is not put on the fire.

Verse 11

או לשה וגו׳ [THUS SHALL IT BE DONE FOR ONE OX …] OR FOR A YOUNG SHEEP שה בכבשים או בעזים — i.e. whether it (the שה) be of the lambs or whether it be of the goats. שֶׂה and שֶׂה are the names given to sheep or goats within their first year., אַיִל is [the name given] from the age of thirteen months and one day (Mishnah Parah 1:3).

Verse 12

כמספר אשר תעשו ACCORDING TO THE NUMBER THAT YE SHALL PREPARE — This means: according to the number of animals that you will offer as sacrifices, ככה תעשו SO SHALL YE OFFER drink-offerings for each of them, כמספרם ACCORDING TO THEIR NUMBER — i.e. as is the number of animals so shall be the number of drink-offerings.

Verse 13

Verse 14

Verse 15

ככם כגר means, AS YOU ARE SO IS THE STRANGER ("you and the stranger shall be alike"). Thus (the use of the prefix כ with each of two things or persons stated to be exactly alike) is the Hebrew idiom to express complete similarity. Examples are: (Genesis 13:10) "As (כ) the garden of the Lord so (כ) is the land of Egypt"; (1 Kings 22:4) "As (כ) I am so (כ) art thou; as (כ) my people is so (כ) is thy people".

Verse 16

Verse 17

Verse 18

בבאכם אל הארץ WHEN YE COME (more lit., on your coming) INTO THE LAND — This statement about their "entering" into the land is expressed differently from all other statements about their "entering" made in the Torah, for in all other cases it is said, "When you come", or "when ye come", — and consequently in all these latter cases each may learn some particular from the other by way of a ש"ג. Therefore, since Scripture distinctly states in one instance of these (Deuteronomy 26:1) that the law there enjoined is applicable only after the full possession (ירושה) of, and definite settlement (ישיבה) in it, ("When thou comest to the land … and thou dost possess it (וירשת) and thou dwellest (וישבת) therein", then thou shalt take of the first of all thy fruits etc.), all other cases where the phrase כי תבא or כי תבאו introduce a law are similar (i.e. the laws laid down in such instances were also to come in force only after ירושה and ישיבה). — In this case, however, it is stated בבאכם "on your coming", implying that as soon as they had entered it (the Land) and ate of its bread they became subject to the law about "Challah" (Sifrei Bamidbar 110:1).

Verse 19

Verse 20

ראשית ערסתכם OF THE FIRST OF YOUR DOUGH [YE SHALL HEAVE A CAKE] — This means: when you knead as much as is now your dough (ערסתכם), i.e. the quantity which you are accustomed to knead in the wilderness — and how much is this? You may learn it from the statements (Exodus 16:18) "And they measured with the Omer" and (Exodus 16:16) "An Omer a head", — you shall set apart at its very beginning (ראשית), meaning, before you eat from it its first portion, one cake (חלה) shall you set apart, as a heave-offering in honour of the Lord (תרימו תרומה לה׳) (Eruvin 83a). חלה is tourteau in O. F., (Engl = cake).
כתרומת גרן EVEN AS THE HEAVE OFFERING OF THE THRESHING FLOOR for which no minimum quantity is stated in the Torah, so shall ye heave it, and not as the "Heave-offering of the Tithe (תרומת מעשר, the priest's share in the Levite's tithe) for which a minimum quantity is stated (cf. Numbers 18:26) (Sifrei Bamidbar 110:1). — The Sages, however have stipulated a minimum quantity for it (the portion set aside) — for a private person (lit., the owner of a house) one twenty-fourth, and for the baker one forty-eighth of the dough (Sifrei Bamidbar 110:1; Mishnah Challah 2:7).

Verse 21

מראשית ערסתיכם OF THE FIRST OF YOUR DOUGH [YE SHALL GIVE UNTO THE LORD A HEAVE OFFERING] — Why is this stated at all? (What does it add to the command in v. 20)? Because it states there ראשית ערסתכם, I might understand this to mean that only the first amongst several doughs which you are kneading at the same time shall you set aside entirely as a heave-offering and all the other doughs are exempt! It therefore states here מראשית "of (some of) the first of the dough", implying part of it but not all of it (not an entire dough) (Sifrei Bamidbar 110:2).
תתנו לה׳ תרומה YE SHALL GIVE UNTO THE LORD A HEAVE OFFERING — Because we have not heard any mention of a definite minimum quantity for the Challah it is stated here "ye shall give", implying that it shall contain sufficient to constitute a "gift" (Sifrei Bamidbar 110:2).

Verse 22

וכי תשגו ולא תעשו AND IF YE HAVE ERRED, AND NOT DONE [ALL THESE COMMANDMENTS WHICH THE LORD HATH SPOKEN UNTO MOSES] — Idolatry (which is the transgression referred to here; cf. Rashi on next passage) is naturally comprehended under the general term "all the commandments" (see Leviticus 4:13) for which the whole community brings a bullock as a sin-offering if it infringes one of them, but, you see, Scripture here excepts it (the sin of idolatry) from the general law about them, to bring it under the law of a bullock as a burnt-offering, and a he-goat for a sin-offering (whilst the rule in Leviticus 4:13 is a bullock for sin-offering, and no he-goat is prescribed) (Sifrei Bamidbar 111:1).
וכי תשגו וגו׳ AND IF YE HAVE ERRED etc. — Scripture is speaking of the sin of idolatry. Or perhaps not, but of the transgression of any of all the commandments? It, however, states, "[And if ye have erred, and not done] all these commandments" which implies "one command that is the same as (the equivalent of) all the commands". What is the case of one who transgresses all the commandments? He throws off the yoke of the Law, breaks the covenant and bids defiance to the Torah (more lit., exposes his face, acts bare-facedly). So, too, must this single commandment referred to here be of such a nature that by transgressing it one throws off the yoke, breaks the covenant and bids defiance to the Torah. And which is this? It is idolatry (Sifrei Bamidbar 111:1).
אשר דבר ה׳ אל משה WHICH THE LORD HATH SPOKEN UNTO MOSES — [This refers to the two commandments prohibiting idolatry:] "I am the Lord, thy God", and "Thou shalt have no other gods, etc.", which we heard from the mouth of the Almighty (and which God also commanded us by Moses (v. 23) in many

other passages where idolatry is forbidden), as it is written (Psalms 62:12): "Once did God speak these commandments to us but we heard them twice" (cf. Sifrei Bamidbar 111:1; Horayot 8a).

Verse 23

את כל אשר צוה וגו׳ EVEN ALL THAT [THE LORD] HATH COMMANDED [YOU] etc. — This tells us that he who acknowledges the divinity of an idol is like one who denies the Torah in its entirety and all that the prophets prophesied, because it states, "[and if yo have erred and not done … all that the Lord hath commanded by Moses] from the day that the Lord commanded (Moses), and hence forth [throughout all your generations]" (cf. Sifrei Bamidbar 111:1).

Verse 24

ואם מעיני העדה נעשתה בשגגה — This means: If it is by the eyes (the leaders) of the community that this sin has been committed in error, i.e., that they have mistakenly taught of a certain one of the rites associated with the worship of God that it is permissible to worship an idol in that manner, [then it shall be that all the congregation shall offer, etc.] (cf. Horayot 5b).
לחטת — This lacks the א usually found in it, to indicate that it is not like other חטאות, sin-offerings; for in the case of all sin offerings mentioned in the Torah that are to be brought together with a burnt offering, the sin-offering precedes the burnt offering (i.e. is offered first), since it is said, (Leviticus 5:10) "And the second animal shall he make as a burnt offering," whilst in this case the burnt offering precedes the sin-offering (Horayot 13a).

Verse 25

והביאו את קרבנם אשה לה׳ [AND] THEY HAVE BROUGHT THEIR OFFERING, A FIRE OFFERING UNTO THE LORD — This is that offering mentioned previously in this chapter (v. 24), viz., the bullock for a burnt offering, since it says here, "a fire offering to the Lord" (which is a description of a burnt offering) (Sifrei Bamidbar 111:3).
וחטאתם AND THEIR SIN OFFERING — This is the he-goat (mentioned in v. 24).

Verse 26

Verse 27

תחטא בשגגה [AND IF ANY SOUL (i.e. any individual)] SIN THROUGH ERROR, by committing idolatry,
עז בת שנתה [HE SHALL BRING] A SHE GOAT OF ONE YEAR [FOR A SIN OFFERING] — For other sins committed in error an individual may bring either a she-lamb or a she-goat as a sin-offering, whilst in the case of this (the sin of idolatry) Scripture has appointed a she-goat for it (Sifrei Bamidbar 112:1).

Verse 28

Verse 29

Verse 30

ביד רמה [BUT A PERSON THAT DOETH OUGHT] WITH A HIGH HAND — i.e. with premeditation.
מגדף is synonymous with מחרף HE REVILETH, as in (Ezekiel 5:15) "it shall be a reproach (חרפה) and a reviling (גדופה) (Isaiah 37:6) "the servants of the king of Assyria have reviled (גדפו)". Further, our Rabbis derived from here the law that he who blasphemes the name of the Lord is liable to excision (Keritot 7b).

Verse 31

דבר ה׳ [BECAUSE HE HATH SCORNED] THE WORD OF THE LORD — The prohibition of idolatry (אנכי and לא יהיה לך) the people heard from the mouth of the Lord but all the other commandments from the mouth of Moses (therefore the prohibition of idolatry is called דבר ה׳ "the utterance of the Lord") (cf. Sifrei Bamidbar 112:2; Sanhedrin 99a).
עונה בה [THAT PERSON SHALL UTTERLY BE CUT OFF] HIS INIQUITY IS UPON HIM — only at the time when (under the circumstances that) his iniquity is upon him shall he be cut off, i.e., in the case that he has not repented (Sanhedrin 90b).

Verse 32

ויהיו... במדבר וימצאו AND [WHEN THE CHILDREN OF ISRAEL] WERE IN THE DESERT, THEY FOUND [A MAN THAT PICKED UP WOOD ON THE SABBATH DAY] — (This must mean when they first came into the wilderness, and) Scripture is speaking here to the disparagement of the Israelites viz., that they kept the first Sabbath only, for on the second this man came and desecrated it (Sifrei Bamidbar 113).

Verse 33

המצאים אתו מקשש THEY THAT FOUND HIM PICKING UP WOOD — [The redundancy of the phrase המצאים אתו מקשש עצים intimates that] they warned him not to do this and yet he did not refrain from picking them up even after they had found him and warned him (cf. Sifrei Bamidbar 113; Sanhedrin 41a).

Verse 34

כי לא פרש מה יעשה לו [AND, THEY PLACED HIM IN WARD] BECAUSE IT WAS NOT EXPLAINED WHAT SHOULD BE DONE WITH HIM — i.e. what kind of death penalty he was to die had not yet been explained, but they were fully aware that one who desecrates the Sabbath is punishable by some death penalty (Sifrei Bamidbar 114; Sanhedrin 78b; cf. Rashi on Leviticus 24:12).

Verse 35

רגום expresses the idea of "doing" something (that is, it is an infinitive or verbal noun); in O. F. faisant; (English = doing). Similarly הלוך allant, "going", and so, too, זכור "remembering", שמור "keeping".

Verse 36

ויציאו אתו AND [ALL THE CONGREGATION] BROUGHT HIM OUTSIDE [THE CAMP] — From here we learn that the place of stoning was outside and distant from the seat of the Beth Din (Sifrei Bamidbar 114).

Verse 37

Verse 38

ועשו להם ציצת THAT THEY MAKE THEM A FRINGE — It is called ציצית, because of the threads that hang down from it. Similar is, (Ezekiel 8:3) "and he caught me by the curls (ציצת) of my head''. (The word denotes something twisted as threads or curls). — Another explanation is: it is called ציצת because of the command associated with it (v. 39) "and ye shall look at it". Similar is, "looking (מציץ) from the lattice" (Song 2:9). (The word therefore denotes "something looked at") (Sifrei Bamidbar 115).
תכלת BLUE PURPLE — It is the blue dye of (obtained from) the blood of the Chilazon (a kind of shell-fish).

Verse 39

וזכרתם את כל מצות ה׳ AND YE SHALL REMEMBER ALL THE COMMANDMENTS OF THE LORD — The ציצית will remind one of all the commandments because the numerical value of the letters of the word ציצית is six hundred, and there are eight threads and five knots in the fringes, so that you have six hundred and thirteen, which is also the number of the commandments of the Torah.
ולא תתרו אחרי לבבכם — The verb has the same meaning as in (Numbers 13:25), "and they returned from searching (מתור) the land". (The translation therefore is: AND YE SHALL NOT SEARCH AFTER YOUR OWN HEART). The heart and the eyes are the "spies" of the body — they act as its agents for sinning: the eye sees, the heart covets and the body commits the sin (Midrash Tanchuma, Sh'lach 15; cf. Talmud Yerushalmi Berakhot 1:8).

Verse 40

Verse 41

אני ה׳ I AM THE LORD Who am faithful to give reward.
אלהיכם YOUR GOD Who am certain to exact punishment (cf. Sifrei Bamidbar 115:1).
אשר הוצאתי אתכם [I AM THE LORD YOUR GOD] WHO BROUGHT YOU OUT [OF THE LAND OF EGYPT TO BE YOUR GOD] — On this condition I delivered you — that you should take upon yourselves My decrees (i.e. that I should be your God) (Sifrei Bamidbar 115:1).
אני ה׳ אלהיכם I AM THE LORD YOUR GOD — Why is this stated again? In order that the Israelites should not say, "Why has the Omnipresent said it (אני ה')? Is it not in order that we should perform the commandments and receive reward (cf. Rashi on previous verse)!? We will not perform them and we shall not receive (we shall not expect) any reward!" Therefore it states again in general terms and without reference to the Exodus from Egypt, "I will be the Lord your God: in spite of yourselves I will be your King (I will exercise My sovereignty upon you). — In a similar sense it states, (Ezekiel 20:23) "Surely with a strong hand … will I reign over you" (Sifrei Bamidbar 115:1). — Another explanation: Why is the exodus from Egypt mentioned in connection with the fringes? In order to intimate: It was I who distinguished in Egypt between one who was a firstborn and one who was not (cf. Rashi on Leviticus 19:36); I shall also find out and exact punishment from him who attaches indigo-dyed wool (which resembles תכלת in colour) on his garments and pretends that it is

תכלת (Bava Metzia 61b). From the work of Rabbi Moses the Preacher I copy the following: Why is the section speaking of the stick-gatherer placed in juxtaposition with the section (vv. 22—31) dealing with idolatry? In order to tell you that whoever desecrates the Sabbath is regarded as having worshipped idols, for it (the law of the Sabbath) also is alone of equal importance with the entire sum of the commandments (just as is the law of idolatry; cf. Rashi on v. 22). And so, too, it is said in the Book of Ezra, (Nehemia 9:13—14) "And Thou camest down upon Mount Sinai and gavest to Thy people … the Torah and commandments and Thou madest known unto them Thy holy Sabbath". And the section dealing with the "Zizith" is also for the same reason placed in juxtaposition with these two sections, because it, too, is of equal importance with the sum total of the commandments, as it is said, (v. 40) "[That ye may remember] and do all My commandments".
על כנפי בגדיהם ON THE BORDERS (lit., wings) OF THEIR GARMENTS — an allusion to God having delivered them from Egypt, as it states, (Exodus 19:4) "And I bore you on eagles' wings" (cf. Rashi on this verse). The Zizith are to be placed on a garment having four corners but not on one that has three or on one that has five corners (cf. Zevachim 18b), thereby alluding to the four different terms used by God in describing the deliverance from Egypt, for it states, (Exodus 6:6—7) "And I will bring forth", "and I shall deliver", "and I shall redeem", "and I shall take out".
פתיל תכלת A THREAD OF BLUE PURPLE — an allusion to the bereavement (שכול) which the Egyptians suffered through the death of their firstborn, for the Targum (Aramaic) word corresponding to שכול, bereavement, is תכלה (similar in sound to תכלת). Further, the plague that befell them was at night, and so, too, the colour תכלת resembles the sky when it darkens at eventide (cf. Sifrei Bamidbar 115:1; Menachot 43b). The eight threads in it (the ציצית) are an allusion to the eight days that Israel waited from the time they went forth from Egypt until they sang the Song of Praise at the Red Sea.

Chapter 16

Verse 1

ויקח קרח — This section is beautifully expounded in the Midrash of Rabbi Tanchuma.
ויקח קרח lit., AND KORAH TOOK — He betook himself on one side with the view of separating himself from out of the community so that he might raise a protest regarding the priesthood to which Moses had appointed his brother. This is what Onkelos means when he renders it by ואתפלג — "he separated himself" from the rest of the community in order to maintain dissension. Similar is, (Job 15:12) "Why doth thy heart take thee aside (יקחך)", meaning, it takes you aside to separate you from other people (Midrash Tanchuma, Korach 2). — Another explanation of ויקח קרח is: he attracted (won over) the chiefs of the Sanhedrin amongst them (the people) by fine words. The word is used here in a figurative sense just as in. (Leviticus 8:2) "Take (קח) Aaron"; (Hosea 14:3) "Take (קחו) words with you" (Midrash Tanchuma, Korach 1).
בן יצהר בן קהת בן לוי [KORAH] THE SON OF IZHAR, THE SON OF KOHATH, THE SON OF LEVI — It does not, however, make mention of Levi being "the son of Jacob", because he (Jacob) offered prayer for himself that his name should not be mentioned in connection with their (the Korahites') quarrels, as it is said, (Genesis 49:6) "with their assembly, my glory. be thou not united". And where is his name mentioned in connection with Korah? In the passage in Chronicles where their (the Korahites')

genealogy is traced in connection with the "Duchan" (properly the platform — the place on which the Levites were stationed for the service of song in the Temple), as it is said, (I Chronicles 6:22—23) "the son of Ebiasaph, the son of Korah, the son of Izhar, the son of Kohath, the son of Levi, the son of Israel" (Midrash Tanchuma, Korach 4).
ודתן ואבירם AND DATHAN AND ABIRAM — Because the tribe of Reuben had their place, when they encamped, in the South, thus being neighbours of Kohath and his sons, who, too, encamped in the South (cf. Numbers 3:29), they (the Reubenites) joined Korah in his quarrel. "Woe to the wicked, woe to his neighbour!" — And what induced Korah to quarrel with Moses? He was envious of the princely dignity held by Elzaphan the son of Uziel (Midrash Tanchuma, Korach 1) whom Moses had appointed prince over the sons of Kohath although this was by the express command of God (Numbers 3:30). Korah argued thus: "My father and his brothers were four in number — as it is said, (Exodus 6:18) "and the sons of Kohath were [Amram and Izhar and Hebron and Uziel]". — "As to Amram, the eldest, his two sons have themselves assumed high dignity, one as king and the other as High Priest; who is entitled to receive the second (the rank next to it)? Is it not "I" who am the son of Izhar, who was the second to Amram amongst the brothers? And yet he has appointed as prince the son of his (Amram's) brother who was the youngest of all of them! I hereby protest against him and will undo his decision". — What did he do? He arose and assembled 250 men, fitted to be heads of the Sanhedrin, most of them of the tribe of Reuben who were his neighbours, viz., Elizur the son of Shedeur, (the prince of the tribe of Reuben; cf. Numbers 1:5), and his colleagues, and others of a similar standing, — for here it states (v. 2) that they were "princes of the congregation, those who were called to the assembly (קראי מועד)", and there (in another passage) it states, (Numbers 1:16) "these were they who were called to the congregation (קרואי העדה)" (amongst whom was also Elizur the son of Shedeur; cf. Numbers 1:5 and Rashi on Numbers 1:16), — and he attired them in robes of pure purple wool. They then came and stood before Moses and said to him, "Is a garment that is entirely of purple subject to the law of Zizith or is it exempt"? He replied to them: "It is subject to that law". Whereupon they began to jeer at him: "Is this possible? A robe of any different coloured material, one thread of purple attached to it exempts it, and this that is entirely of purple should it not exempt itself (i.e. ipso facto be exempt) from the law of "Zizith"? (Midrash Tanchuma, Korach 2).
בני ראובן THE SONS OF REUBEN — this describes Dathan and Abiram and On the son of Peleth.

Verse 2

Verse 3

רב לכם You TAKE TOO MUCH UPON YOU — i.e. much more than is proper have you taken for yourselves in the way of high Office.
כלם קדשים [FOR] ALL [THE CONGREGATION] ARE HOLY — they all heard the utterances on Sinai from the mouth of the Almighty (Midrash Tanchuma, Korach 4).
ומדוע תתנשאו WHY THEN LIFT YE UP YOURSELVES [ABOVE THE ASSEMBLY OF THE LORD] — "If you have taken royal rank for yourself, you should at least not have chosen the priesthood for your brother — it is not you alone who have heard at Sinai: 'I am the Lord thy God', all the congregation heard it!" (Midrash Tanchuma, Korach 4).

Verse 4

ויפל על פניו [AND WHEN MOSES HEARD IT,] HE FELL UPON HIS FACE because of the rebellion, for this was already the fourth offence on their part: when they sinned by worshipping the Golden Calf, it states, (Exodus 32:11) "And Moses besought [the Lord]"; in the case of the "people who complained", (Numbers 11:1) it states: "and Moses prayed"; at the incident of the "spies", (Numbers 14:13) "And Moses said unto the Lord, 'When the Egyptians shall hear it... [and now I beseech Thee etc.]"; but now at the rebellion of Korah, his hands sank down (he felt himself powerless) A parable! This may be compared to the case of a prince who sinned against his father and for whom his (the father's) friend gained forgiveness once, twice, three times. When he offended for the fourth time the friend felt himself powerless, for he said, " How long can I trouble the king? Perhaps he will not again accept advocacy from me!" (Midrash Tanchuma, Korach 4).

Verse 5

בקר וידע וגו׳ TOMORROW THE LORD WILL MAKE KNOWN [WHO ARE HIS] — "Now (this hour of the day)" — he meant — "is a time of excessive drinking, and it is therefore not proper to appear before Him". But his real intention in postponing the matter was that perhaps they might repent (abandon their opposition) (Midrash Tanchuma, Korach 5).
בקר וידע ה את אשר לו' TOMORROW THE LORD WILL MAKE KNOWN WHO ARE TO BE HIS for the Levitical service,
ואת הקדוש AND HIM WHO IS HOLY enough for the priesthood,
והקריב AND HE WILL BRING them אליו UNTO HIM. The Targum proves that this is so (i.e. that Scripture alludes to two different matters), for it renders the first phrase by "He will bring near to Him", and the second by "He will bring near to His service". — A Midrashic explanation of the word בקר (instead of the more usual מחר) is the following: Moses said to him (Korah): "The Holy One, blessed be He, has assigned bounds in His world; can you, perhaps, change the morning into evening? Just as little, will you be able to make this (Aaron's appointment as High Priest) of none effect, — as indeed it states, (Genesis 1:5) "and it was evening and it was morning… (Genesis 1:4) "and God separated (ויבדל) [light from darkness]"; and in the same sense (that the separation should be of a permanent character) it states, (I Chronicles 23:13) "and Aaron was separated (ויבדל) that he should be sanctified [as most holy … to minister unto him]" (Midrash Tanchuma, Korach 5).

Verse 6

זאת עשו קחו לכם מחתות THIS DO: TAKE YOU CENSERS — What reason had he to speak to them thus? He said to them: according to the custom of the heathens there are numerous forms of divine worship, and consequently numerous priests, for they cannot assemble for worship in one temple; we, however, have One God, one Ark, one Law, one Altar, all constituting one form of worship and therefore we need but one High Priest; — and you, 250 men, all demand the High Priesthood?! I would like this myself, but events will prove that this is impossible. Here you have a rite which is dear to God more than any other — it is the offering of incense, which is even dearer to Him than all the sacrifices, but a deadly poison is contained in it, for through it Nadab and Abihu were burnt!" (cf. Leviticus 10:2). It was on this account that he warned them by saying, And it shall come to pass that the man whom the Lord will choose is the holy one — he is already in his state of holiness (not "he will become holy"; he thus warned them that there was not the slightest likelihood that they would be chosen). This must be the meaning of הוא הקדוש, not "he will become holy", for do we not know that he whom He would choose would become holy? But this, in effect, is what Moses said to them: "I am

telling you this in order that you may not imperil your lives, for only he whom He will choose will come out of this alive, but all of you will perish" (Midrash Tanchuma, Korach 5).
מחתות CENSERS — vessels into which coals are raked and which have a handle (cf. Rashi on Exodus 27:3).

Verse 7

רב לכם בני לוי means, "It is a great (an important) thing that I have told you, ye sons of Levi"). But were they not fools in that although he so sternly warned them they nevertheless undertook to offer! They, however, sinned against their own souls (i.e., they were regardless of their lives) as it is said, (17:3) "the censers of these sinners against their souls". — But Korah who certainly was a clever (lit., open-eyed) man, what reason had he to commit this folly? His mind's eye misled him. He saw by prophetic vision a line of great men (more lit., a great chain) descending from him, amongst them the prophet Samuel who was equal in importance to Moses and Aaron together (cf. Psalms 99:6: משה ואהרן בכהניו ושמואל בקראי שמו), and he said to himself, "On his account I shall escape the punishment". And he further saw twenty-four Mishmars (shifts of Levites who formed the Temple Choir) arising among his grand-children, all of them prophesying by the Holy Spirit, — as it is said, (I Chronicles 25:5) "All these (prominent musicians) were sons of Heiman" (Heiman was a descendant of Korah; cf. I Chronicles 6:18—23). — He said, "Is it possible that all this dignity is to arise from me and I shall remain silent (be myself of no importance)?" On this account he joined the others in order to attain to that prerogative, because he had indeed heard from the mouth of Moses that all else of them would perish and one would escape: "He whom the Lord will choose will be holy". He mistakenly applied this to himself. But he had not seen correctly, for his sons repented of their rebellious attitude and therefore did not die at that time (cf. Numbers 26:11), and it was from them that Samuel and the Levitical singers were descended. Moses, however, foresaw this. (Midrash Tanchuma, Korach 5).
רב לכם means, a great responsibility have you taken upon yourselves in rebelling against the Holy One, blessed be He.

Verse 8

ויאמר משה אל קרח שמעו נא בני לוי AND MOSES SAID UNTO KORAH, HEAR, I PRAY YOU, YE SONS OF LEVI — He began to speak to him with gentle words; when, however, he saw that he was stubborn, he said to himself: Before the other tribes join him and perish together with him, I will speak to them all!" He thereupon began to admonish them: "Hear ye, ye sons of Levi!" (Midrash Tanchuma, Korach 6).

Verse 9

ולעמד לפני העדה AND TO STAND BEFORE THE CONGREGATION to sing on the Duchan (the Platform).

Verse 10

ויקרב אתך AND HE HATH BROUGHT THEE NEAR to that service from which He has excluded the rest of the congregation of Israel.

Verse 11

לכן means because of this — because of all this that I have mentioned,
אתה וכל עדתך הנועדים BOTH YOU AND ALL YOUR CONGREGATION WHO ARE GATHERED

with you, על ה׳ are AGAINST THE LORD, for it is by His commission that I am acting in giving the Priesthood to Aaron; and this rebellion is therefore not against "us" (Midrash Tanchuma, Korach 6).

Verse 12

וישלח משה וגו׳ AND MOSES SENT [TO CALL DATHAN AND ABIRAM] — From here we may learn that one should not persist in strife (Midrash Tanchuma, Korach 10), for, you see, Moses sought them out in order to conciliate them by peaceful words (Sanhedrin 110a).
לא נעלה WE WILL NOT GO UP — Their mouth tripped them up (i.e. unwittingly they made mention of their fate) — that they would have only a "descent" (their words are taken to mean: we shall not be going up; we shall go down into the depths of the earth) (Midrash Tanchuma, Korach 6).

Verse 13

Verse 14

ותתן לנו (lit., thou hast given us) — The statement must he referred to the word לא, "not", mentioned before, the meaning being: Thou hast not brought us into a land flowing with milk and honey, and thou hast not given us inheritance of fields and vineyards. — You told us, (Exodus 3:7) "I will bring you up from the affliction of Egypt" into a good land: from there (from such a land; cf. v. 13), indeed, you have brought us forth, but you have not brought us instead into a land flowing with milk and honey; on the contrary — you have passed a decree upon us to kill us in the wilderness, for you have said, (Numbers 14:29) "Your carcasses shall fall in this desert."
העיני האנשים ההם תנקר WILT THOU PUT OUT THE EYES OF THESE MEN etc. — This means: even if you were to send to put out our eyes if we would not come up to you we would not come up!
האנשים ההם THESE MEN — [They meant themselves, but spoke of other people's eyes being put out], like a man who attaches to his fellow the curse which should come upon himself (cf. Rashi on Exodus 1:10).

Verse 15

ויחר למשה מאד AND MOSES WAS VERY DISTRESSED — i.e. he was very much grieved.
אל תפן אל מנחתם TURN NOT THOU TO THEIR OBLATION — According to its plain sense the meaning is: "In respect to the frankincense which they will offer before Thee tomorrow, I beg of Thee do not turn (pay regard) to them". The Midrashic explanation is: He said, "I know that they have a portion in the continual offerings of the community; let not even this their portion be accepted favourably before Thee — let the fire leave it alone and not consume it" (Midrash Tanchuma, Korach 7).
לא חמור אחד מהם נשאתי means, I have not taken the ass of any one of them; — even when I went from Midian to Egypt and placed my wife and my sons on the ass (Exodus 4:20), and I surely ought afterwards to have taken the price of that ass from their money, yet I took it only from my own (Midrash Tanchuma, Korach 7). The translation given by Onkelos of the word נשאתי is שחרית: in the Aramaic language a forced levy made by the king is so called, viz., שחרור (cf. Rashi on Bava Batra 47a. The translation of Onkelos therefore is: I did not press into my service the ass of any one of them).

Verse 16

והם [THOU] AND THEY [AND AARON] — they means thy congregation.

Verse 17

והקרבתם איש מחתתו AND OFFER YE [BEFORE THE LORD] EVERY MAN HIS CENSER — "every man" means, the 250 men amongst you.

Verse 18

Verse 19

ויקהל עליהם קרח AND KORAH CONVENED [ALL THE CONGREGATION] AGAINST THEM, by means of scoffing language: that whole night he went round to all the tribes and tried to win them over: "Do you really think that I care for myself alone? It is only for all of you that I have a care! These men come and occupy every high office: royal rank for himself, for his brother the priesthood!" — until in the end all of them submitted to his persuasion (Midrash Tanchuma, Korach 7).
וירא כבוד ה׳ AND THE GLORY OF THE LORD APPEARED [UNTO ALL THE CONGREGATION] — He came in a pillar of cloud.

Verse 20

Verse 21

Verse 22

אל אלהי הרוחות O GOD, THE GOD OF THE SPIRITS [OF ALL FLESH] — i.e., "[O God] who knowest the thoughts of every man". Thy nature is not like that of human beings: an earthly king against whom part of his country commits an offence, does not know who the sinner is, and therefore when he becomes angry he exacts punishment from all of them. But Thou — before Thee all human thoughts lie open and Thou knowest who is the sinner (Midrash Tanchuma, Korach 7).
האיש אחד means, THE ONE MAN IS THE SINNER, and על כל העדה תקצוף YOU ARE ANGRY WITH ALL THE CONGREGATION?! Whereupon the Holy One, blessed be He, replied, "You have spoken well; I know and shall make known who has sinned and who has not sinned" (Midrash Tanchuma, Korach 7).

Verse 23

Verse 24

העלו GET YOU UP [FROM ABOUT THE DWELLING OF KORAH] — Understand this as the Targum does: withdraw from the vicinity of Korah's dwelling.

Verse 25

ויקם משה AND MOSES ROSE UP [AND WENT UNTO DATHAN AND ABIRAM] — He still believed that they would show respect to him (defer to him if he personally appealed to them), but they did not do so, (and therefore he

then addressed himself to all the congregation — cf. next verse) (Midrash Tanchuma, Korach 8).

Verse 26

Verse 27

יצאו נצבים [AND DATHAN AND ABIRAM] CAME OUT, STATIONING THEMSELVES [AT THE ENTRANCE OF THEIR TENT] — The word נצבים suggests that they stood with erect stature in a challenging attitude, ready to revile and to curse. The phrase is similar in meaning to (I Samuel 17:16) "And he stationed himself (ויתיצב) there for forty days", which occurs in the story of Goliath (Midrash Tanchuma, Korach 3).
ונשיהם ובניהם וטפם AND THEIR WIVES, AND THEIR SONS, AND THEIR LITTLE ONES — Come and see how grievous a sin dissension is: for an earthly tribunal (more lit., a tribunal of here below) does not punish a person before he shows signs of puberty, the heavenly tribunal (more lit., the tribunal of above) not even before he is twenty years old, while here even the sucklings perished (Midrash Tanchuma, Korach 3).

Verse 28

לעשות את כל המעשים האלה [HEREBY YE SHALL KNOW THAT THE LORD HATH SENT ME] TO DO ALL THESE THINGS — i.e. that I have acted by the Divine Command in giving Aaron the High Priesthood, and in making his sons second in rank in the priesthood and Elzaphan prince of the Kohathites.

Verse 29

לא ה' שלחני [IF THESE MEN DIE THE COMMON DEATH OF ALL MEN] … THEN THE LORD HATH NOT SENT ME. but I have done everything of my own accord and he (Korah) is therefore right in rebelling against me.

Verse 30

ואם בריאה BUT IF A CREATION — i.e. an entirely new one.
יברא ה' THE LORD WILL CREATE, to slay them by a kind of death by which no man has hitherto died — and what is this new creation?
ופצתה האדמה את פיה THAT THE EARTH OPEN WIDE HER MOUTH AND SWALLOW THEM, then וידעתם כי נאצו YE SHALL KNOW THAT THEY HAVE PROVOKED the Holy One, blessed be He, and that I have spoken only by authority of the Almighty. Our Rabbis, however, gave the following explanation: ואם בריאה, if there has been a creation, i.e., if there was already a mouth to the earth from the six days of Creation, well and good! but if not, יברא ה' the Lord will create one now (Sanhedrin 110a; Nedarim 39b).

Verse 31

Verse 32

Verse 33

Verse 34

נסו לקולם [AND ALL ISRAEL …] FLED AWAY AT THEIR VOICE — i.e. on account of the sound that broke out because of their being swallowed up.

Chapter 17

Verse 1

Verse 2

ואת האש AND THE FIRE — that is in the censers (not, as might be assumed, that of the burning materials — the שרפה just mentioned).
זרה הלאה SCATTER YONDER on the ground from off the censers.
כי קדשו FOR THEY — the censers — ARE HALLOWED, and are therefore forbidden for any profane use, since they have made them into "vessels of service" (כלי שרת) (by using them for offering incense).

Verse 3

החטאים האלא בנפשתם THESE SINNERS AGAINST THEIR OWN SOULS — i.e. who became wilful transgressors against their own souls, because they rebelled against the Holy One, blessed be He.
רקעי means beaten out (flattened).
פחים are plates beaten out thin, tendus in O. F.
צפוי למזבח FOR AN OVERLAYING FOR THE ALTAR — i.e. for the copper altar.
ויהיו לאות AND THEY SHALL BE AS AN אות — The word לאות is the same as לזכרון, something to be mentioned (cf. Exodus 13:9) — that people will always say: These plates were from (once belonged to) those who raised dissension about the priesthood and were burnt.

Verse 4

וירקעום AND THEY EXTENDED THEM — Etendre in O. F.

Verse 5

ולא יהיה כקרח means in order that he be not as Korah.
כאשר דבר ה' ביד משה לו AS THE LORD HAD SPOKEN BY THE AGENCY OF MOSES לו — The latter word is the same as עליו, "with regard to him", i.e. "with regard to Aaron": He had spoken to Moses that he and his sons should be priests; therefore a layman, who is not of the seed of Aaron, shall not approach etc. Similarly in every instance of the words לי or לו or להם which are connected with forms of the verb דבר, their meaning is the same as על, "concerning". A Midrashic explanation is that לו, "with regard to him", means: with regard to Korah (not to Aaron). But what, then, is meant by the expression "by the hand of Moses"; why does it not write "unto Moses"? It is used as an intimation to those who rebel against the institution of the priesthood: that they will become stricken with leprosy, just as Moses was stricken with it on his hand, as it is said, (Exodus 4:6) "and he took it (the hand) forth and, behold, it was leprous, white as snow". And on account of this (that he insisted on offering incense in spite of the priests' protest) Uzziah was stricken with leprosy (II Chronicles 26:19) (Midrash Tanchuma, Tzav 1 on צו; cf. also Sanhedrin 110a and Rashi on Isaiah 6:4).

Verse 6

Verse 7

Verse 8

Verse 9

Verse 10

Verse 11

וכפר עליהם AND MAKE AN EXPIATION FOR THEM — This secret the Angel of Death communicated to him (Moses) when he went up unto heaven to receive the Torah, viz., that the incense holds back the plague — as is related in Treatise Shabbat 89a.

Verse 12

Verse 13

וישמד בין המתים וגו׳ AND HE STOOD BETWEEN THE DEAD [AND THE LIVING] — He (Aaron) seized the Angel of Death and stopped him despite himself. The angel said to him, "Let me be, so that I may carry out my commission!" He (Aaron) answered him, "Moses has bidden me prevent you". The angel replied, "I am the messenger of the Omnipresent whilst you are but the messenger of Moses!" Aaron retorted, "Moses does not say anything out of his own mind, but only at the command of the Almighty. If you do not believe me, behold, the Holy One, blessed be He, and Moses are at the entrance of the appointed tent; come with me and ask them!" This is the meaning of what is stated (v. 15): And Aaron returned unto Moses (i.e. returned together with the Angel of Death) (cf. Midrash Tanchuma, Tetzaveh 15 at end of תצוה). Another explanation is: Wherefore was the plague stayed by means of the incense? Because the Israelites were traducing and speaking ill of the incense, saying, "It is a deadly poison: through it Nadab and Abihu died; through it the two hundred and fifty men were burnt!" therefore the Holy One, blessed be He, said, You will see that it is also a means for restraining the plague, and it is only sin that brings death" (Mekhilta on Exodus 17:5).

Verse 14

Verse 15

Verse 16

Verse 17

Verse 18

כי מטה אחד FOR ONE STAFF SHALL BE (FOR THE HEAD OF THE HOUSE OF THEIR FATHERS) — i.e. although I have divided them into two families, the family of the priests apart, and that of the Levites apart, yet it is only one tribe, [and they shall therefore have but one staff].

Verse 19

Verse 20

והשכתי AND I WILL CAUSE TO CEASE — This word is the same as in (Genesis 8:1) "and the waters abated (וישכו)"; (Esther 7:10) "and the wrath of the king was abated (שככה)".

Verse 21

בתוך מטותם [AND THE STAFF OF AARON WAS] IN THE MIDST OF THEIR STAVES — He placed Aarons staff in the middle (בתוך) in order that people should not say, "It is only because he placed it at the side where the Shechinah is that it blossomed" (Midrash Tanchuma, Achrei Mot 8 on אחרי מות).

Verse 22

Verse 23

ויצא פרח AND IT BROUGHT FORTH A BLOSSOM — Take this as what it literally implies.
ציץ is the first stage in the growth of the fruit when the blossom has fallen off.
ויגמל שקדים AND RIPENED INTO ALMONDS — This means that when the fruit was recognisable as such it could be recognised that they were almonds. The verb has the same meaning as in (Genesis 21:8) "And the child grew ויגמל, and became a full child" (i.e., able to do without its mother's milk). This expression is frequently used of the fruit of trees, as e.g. (Isaiah 18:5) "And the blossom becometh a ripening (גמל) grape" (cf. Rashi on Genesis 40:10). — But why did it bring forth almonds? Because it is a fruit that blossoms earlier than all other fruits; so, too, the punishment of him who sets himself in opposition to the constituted priesthood comes quickly, just as we find stated in the case of Uzziah (II Chronicles 26:19) "And the leprosy instantly broke out in his forehead". — Its translation in the Targum is: וכפת שגדין, meaning that it produced a kind of cluster of almonds, knotted together one upon the other (Aramaic כפת denotes "tied").

Verse 24

Verse 25

למשמרת לאות TO BE KEPT AS A SIGN — i.e. as a reminder that I have chosen Aaron to be the priest and that they should therefore not murmur any more against the priesthood.
ותכל תלונתם is the same as וּתְכַלֶּה תלונתם, AND THOU SHALT MAKE AN END OF THEIR MURMURING. This form (תלֻנתם) is a nomen actionis (שם מפעל), singular number, feminine gender, the same as is תלוּנָתם; in O. F. murmures. But there is a difference in sense between תלֻנתם and תלוּנָתם. The word תלוּנָתם denotes a single act of murmuring; תלֻנתם is a noun with singular meaning although there may be many acts of murmuring.

Verse 26

Verse 27

Verse 28

כל הקרב הקרב וגו׳ WHOSOEVER APPROACHETH [UNTO THE DWELLING OF THE LORD SHALL DIE] — The meaning is: "We cannot be cautious enough in this matter: we are all of us allowed to enter into the court of the appointed tent, but one who betakes himself nearer than his fellow and goes into the appointed tent itself will die!
האם תמנו לגוע means are we perhaps constantly to be freely exposed to the danger of death?

Chapter 18

Verse 1

ויאמר ה' אל אהרן AND GOD SAID UNTO AARON — i.e. He said it to Moses that he in turn should speak to Aaron to admonish him regarding the precautions to be taken for the benefit of the Israelites in order that they might not enter the Sanctuary (cf. Rashi on Leviticus 1:1 s. v. אליו and Note thereon).
אתה ובניך ובית אביך THOU, AND THY SONS, AND THY FATHERS HOUSE [… SHALL BEAR THE INIQUITY] — "And thy father's house" refers to the sons of Kohath the father of Amram (whose charge it was to carry and to watch over the most holy vessels; cf. chapter Numbers IV.).
תשאו את עון המקדש [THOU, AND THY SONS, …] SHALL BEAR THE INIQUITY OF THE SANCTUARY — upon you I impose the punishment for any strangers who may inadvertently sin in respect to the sacred objects (המקדש) which are entrusted to you, — which are the tent, the Ark, the table and the holy vessels; you have to sit down (i.e. wait there and be in readiness) and give warning to any stranger who may be about to touch the holy articles.
ואתה ובניך AND THOU AND THY SONS, the priests,
תשאו את עון כהנתכם SHALL BEAR THE INIQUITY OF THY PRIESTHOOD — for it is not a charge given to the Levites; you must therefore warn the Levites who might do so inadvertently not to come near to you whilst you perform your service.

Verse 2

וגם את אחיך AND ALSO THY BRETHREN — i.e. the sons of Gershon and the sons of Merari.
וילוו means THAT THEY MAY JOIN THEMSELVES UNTO THEE to warn also the strangers (the ordinary Israelites) not to come near to them.
וישרתוך AND THEY SHALL MINISTER UNTO THEE by guarding the Temple gates and by appointing from among them (cf. Arakhin 11b) keepers of the Temple treasury and superintendents over these (Sifrei Bamidbar 116:1).

Verse 3

Verse 4

וזר לא יקרב אליכם AND A LAYMAN SHALL NOT APPROACH UNTO YOU — It is you whom I admonish concerning this.

Verse 5

ולא יהיה עוד קצף THAT THERE BE NO ANGER ANY MORE as there has been already, as it is said, (Numbers 17:11) "For there is anger gone [forth from the Lord]" (Sifrei Bamidbar 116:1).

Verse 6

לכם מתנה נתתים TO YOU THEY ARE GIVEN AS A GIFT — I might think that they are given unto you for your private work! It, however, states, "[to you they are given as a gift] for the Lord" — meaning, as explained above (v. 2), — to keep the charge of Temple treasuries and superintendents (Sifrei Bamidbar 116:2).

Verse 7

עבדת מתנה [I HAVE GIVEN YOUR PRIESTHOOD UNTO YOU] AS A SERVICE OF GIFT — This means as a gift have I given it to you, [and the stranger that comes near shall die].

Verse 8

ואני הנה נתתי לך AND I, BEHOLD, I HAVE ALSO GIVEN THEE [THE CHARGE OF MINE HEAVE OFFERING] with pleasure. This is suggested by the word "Behold", for this is an expression used when something is done with pleasure, just as in, (Exodus 4:14) "Behold, he goeth forth to meet thee and when he will see thee he will rejoice in his heart!" A parable! This may be compared to a king who presented a field to his friend, but he did not write or seal a deed of gift nor did he record it in the court. When a man came and laid claim to the field, the king said to him, "It seems that anyone who wishes to do so may come and claim against you; behold, I will write and seal a deed of gift to you, and record it in the court! So here, too, because Korah came and made a claim against Aaron to the Priesthood, Scripture (God) came and gave him the twenty-four "gifts" of the priesthood as an everlasting covenant of salt (i.e. an enduring covenant). For this reason is this section recording the gifts of the priests placed here after that which narrates Korah's rebellion (Sifrei Bamidbar 117:1).
משמרת תרומתי [I HAVE GIVEN UNTO YOU] THE KEEPING OF MY HEAVE OFFERINGS — This means that you have to keep them in a state of purity (to guard them against uncleanness).
למשחה means as a distinction (cf. Onkelos; Sifrei Bamidbar 117:2; Zevachim 91a).

Verse 9

מן האש FROM THE FIRE — i.e., after the burning of the portions given over the fire. (The words are taken to mean: from the time when the fire has operated).
כל קרבנם EVERY OFFERING OF THEIRS — for instance the sacrifices of communal feast offerings.
מנחתם חטאתם ואשמם EVERY MEAL OFFERING OF THEIRS, AND EVERY SIN OFFERING OF THEIRS, AND EVERY GUILT OFFERING OF THEIRS — all these offerings should be understood in their usual meanings.
אשר ישיבו לי WHICH THEY SHALL RENDER (more lit., which they shall return) UNTO ME — This refers to property wrongfully taken from a proselyte (which, when he has no legal heir, reverts to the priests; cf. Rashi on v. 8) (Sifrei Bamidbar 117:2; Zevachim 44b).

Verse 10

בקדש הקדשים תאכלנו וגו׳ IN THE MOST HOLY PLACE THOU SHALT EAT IT etc. — This teaches with reference to the sacrifices holy in the highest degree that they must be eaten only in the fore-court and only by male priests (cf. Sifrei Bamidbar 117:2).

Verse 11

תרומת מתנם [AND THIS IS THINE:] THE HEAVE OFFERING OF THEIR GIFTS (i.e. of offerings given of their free will) — that which is set apart from the thanksgiving offering (cf. Leviticus 7:34), and from the festival offerings and from the ram of the Nazarite (Numbers 6:17).
לכל תנופת [AND THIS IS THINE: THE HEAVE OFFERING OF THEIR GIFT] AS REGARDS ALL THAT FORMS A WAVE OFFERING [OF THE CHILDREN OF ISRAEL] — That the above named offerings are intended is evident, for, you see, it is these that require waving (Sifrei Bamidbar 117:2).
כל טהור EVERY ONE THAT IS CLEAN [IN THY HOUSE SHALL EAT IT] — but not those who are unclean. Another explanation is: The expression “every one [in the house] that is clean” is intended to include his (the priest’s) wife (cf. Sifrei Bamidbar 117:2).

Verse 12

ראשיתם THE FIRST FRUITS OF THEM [WHICH THEY SHALL GIVE UNTO THE LORD; THEM I HAVE GIVEN THEE] — This refers to the “T’rumah Gedolah” (the priest’s portion of the produce which is the first portion to be set aside from the produce; cf. Deuteronomy 18:4).

Verse 13

Verse 14

Verse 15

Verse 16

Verse 17

Verse 18

כחזה התנופה וכשוק הימין [AND THE FLESH OF THEM (of the firstborn animals) SHALL BE TO YOU] AS THE WAVE BREAST AND THE RIGHT SHOULDER of the festival offerings which may be eaten by the priests, their wives and their sons and men-servants during a period of two days and one (the intervening) night, reckoning from the day of slaughtering; so, too, the flesh of the firstborn animal sacrifice may be eaten during two days and one night (Sifrei Bamidbar 118; Zevachim 57a).
לך יהיה IT SHALL BE THINE — Rabbi Akiba came and taught: By repeating the words לך יהיה Scripture adds another "status" (more lit., state of being; i.e., it intends the status implied in the first לך יהיה to be extended), in order that you should not say that it shall be to them even as the breast and shoulder of the thanksgiving offering, which may only be eaten during one day and the following night (Sifrei Bamidbar 118; Zevachim 57a).

Verse 19

כל תרומת הקדשים ALL THE HEAVE OFFERINGS OF THE HOLY THINGS [… HAVE I GIVEN THEE] — Out of a feeling of affection for the contents of this section, Scripture comprehends it at first in a general statement (v. 11: וזה לכם תרומת וגו׳), and comprehends it also in a general statement at the end (in this verse) and enumerates the details in between (vv. 12—18) (Sifrei Bamidbar 118).
ברית מלח עולם [IT IS] A COVENANT OF SALT FOR EVER — This means that He made a covenant with Aaron by means of something which is wholesome and lasting and keeps other things wholesome (Sifrei Bamidbar 118).
ברית מלח A COVENANT OF SALT — Another explanation is that ברית מלח is equivalent to כברית מלח, and the meaning is: like the covenant that was made with salt that it will never decay.

Verse 20

וחלק לא יהיה לך בתוכם [THOU SHALT NOT INHERIT THEIR LAND,] NEITHER SHALT THOU HAVE ANY PORTION IN THE MIDST OF THEM even in the spoil (Sifrei Bamidbar 119:1).

Verse 21

Verse 22

Verse 23

והם [BUT THE LEVITES SHALL PERFORM THE SERVICE OF THE APPOINTED TENT] AND THEY SHALL BEAR THEIR INIQUITY — "They" means the Levites; they shall bear the iniquity of the children of Israel, because upon them (the Levites) lies the duty to warn them (the Israelites) not to come near unto them.

Verse 24

אשר ירימו לה׳ תרומה [BUT ALL THE TITHES OF THE CHILDREN OF ISRAEL] WHICH THEY HEAVE AS A HEAVE OFFERING UNTO THE LORD — Scripture terms it (the tithe) T’rumah (although it is not holy and may be eaten by a layman) until he (the Levite) sets apart from it the “heave offering of the tithe” (Sifrei Bamidbar 119:5).

Verse 25

Verse 26

Verse 27

ונחשב לכם תרומתכם כדגן מן הגרן AND THIS YOUR HEAVE OFFERING SHALL BE RECKONED UNTO YOU AS THOUGH IT WERE THE CORN OF THE THRESHING FLOOR — i.e. the heave-offering of your tithe is forbidden to laymen and to unclean priests, and such of these as eat it of set purpose incur the death penalty, or, if they have eaten it inadvertently, pay in addition to the capital sum a fifth, just as in the case of “T’rumah Gedolah” (the T’rumah set apart by the ordinary Israelite) which is termed the “firstling of the corn” from the threshing floor.
וכמלאה מן היקב AND AS THE FULNESS OF THE WINE PRESS — the heave offering of wine and oil which is taken out of the wine-press.
מלאה is a term for “ripening”; it is the produce that becomes full.
יקב is the pit in front of the wine-press into which the wine runs. The expression יקב always denotes an excavation in the ground. Similar is יקבי המלך, (Zechariah 14:10) “the pits of the King”, that is, the ocean (cf. Rashi on that verse) — the cavity which the King of the Universe has excavated.

Verse 28

כן תרימו גם אתם THUS YE ALSO SHALL HEAVE AN HEAVE OFFERING just as the ordinary Israelites set apart a heave offering, from the produce of their threshing floors and wine presses, so you Levites, also, shall set apart a heave offering from your tithes, for that is your inheritance (cf. v. 24).

Verse 29

מכל מתנתיכם תרימו את כל תרומת ה׳ OUT OF ALL YOUR GIFTS YOU SHALL HEAVE EVERY HEAVE OFFERING UNTO THE LORD — Scripture is speaking here of the “Terumah Gedolah” (not of תרומת מעשר, for this is dealt with in verse 28); the meaning is, that if the Levite came to the field before the priest, when the grain has been made into a heap (i.e., after it has been threshed, when it becomes subject to the law of Terumah), and received his tithes before the priest took the Terumah Gedolah from the heap, the Levite must first set apart the fiftieth part (the usual proportion of the crop which the Israelite gives to the priest) of the tithe as “Terumah Gedolah” and then again set apart the תרומת מעשר (i.e. the tithe of his tithe) (Shabbat 127b).

Verse 30

בהרימכם את חלבו ממנו WHEN YE HEAVE THE BEST THEREOF FROM IT — i.e. after you have heaved the תרומת מעשר (the priest’s share in the tithe) from it.

ונחשב THEN the remainder MAY BE ACCOUNTED by the Levites as profane (of a non-sacred character) in all respects.
כתבואת גרן AS THE PRODUCE OF THRESHING FLOOR is to the Israelites. [This is not a mere repetition of verse 27 but is stated in order that] you should not say: Since Scripture terms it (the tithe) "Terumah", — as it is said, (verse 24) "But the tithes of the children of Israel which they heave as a תרומה unto the Lord" — I may conclude that it is all entirely forbidden to the Levites (just as "Terumah" is forbidden to them); Scripture therefore states, "it shall be accounted unto the Levites as the produce of the threshing floor". How is it with the remainder of the Israelite's produce after he has set apart the "Terumah"? It is profane (non-holy)! So, too, is the corresponding portion of the Levite's tithe profane (cf. Sifrei Bamidbar 122).

Verse 31

בכל מקום AND YE MAY EAT IN EVERY PLACE — even in a cemetery (Sifrei Bamidbar 122).

Verse 32

ולא תשאו עליו חטא וגו׳ AND YE SHALL BEAR NO SIN BY REASON OF IT etc. — This implies: consequently if you do not set it aside you will bear sin on that account.
ולא תמותו LEST YE DIE — consequently if you do profane them you will die (Bekhorot 26b; cf. Rashi on Exodus 30:20 and Note thereon).

Chapter 19

Verse 1

Verse 2

וזאת חקת התורה THIS IS THE ORDINANCE OF THE LAW — Because Satan and the nations of the world taunt Israel, saying, "What is this command and what reason is there for it", on this account it (Scripture) writes (uses) the term חקה about it, implying: It is an enactment from before Me; you have no right to criticize it (Yoma 67b; cf. Midrash Tanchuma, Chukat 7).
ויקחו אליך THEY SHALL TAKE UNTO THEE — It will always be called by thy name: people will speak of the cow which Moses prepared in the wilderness (Midrash Tanchuma, Chukat 8).
אדמה תמימה [A COW] RED, PERFECT — This means that it should be perfect in respect to its redness (Sifrei Bamidbar 123:1), — so that if there are two black hairs in it (or two of any color other than red) it is unfitted for the rite here described (Mishnah Parah 2:5).

Verse 3

אלעזר [YE SHALL GIVE IT TO] ELEAZAR — The command concerning it is to be carried out by the Segan (the second to the High Priest) (Sifrei Bamidbar 123:2; Yoma 42b).
אל מחוץ למחנה [HE SHALL BRING IT FORTH] WITHOUT THE CAMP — Outside the three camps (Yoma 68a; cf. Rashi on Leviticus 4:12).
ושחט אתה לפניו AND ONE SHALL SLAUGHTER IT IN HIS PRESENCE — A stranger (a non-priest) slaughters it while Eleazar looks on (superintends) (Sifrei Bamidbar 123:2; Yoma 42a).

Verse 4

אל נכח פני אהל מועד [HE SHALL SPRINKLE THE BLOOD] TOWARDS THE FRONT SIDE OF THE APPOINTED TENT He stands at the East of Jerusalem and must direct his gaze straight towards the entrance of the Hechal at the time of sprinkling the blood (Sifrei Bamidbar 123:2; Yoma 68a).

Verse 5

Verse 6

Verse 7

אל המחנה [AND AFTERWARDS HE MAY COME] INTO THE CAMP — into the camp of the Shechina (in the case of the Temple at Jerusalem, into the forecourt, the עזרה, immediately in front of the Temple), from which alone he had been barred, for no unclean person was expelled from two camps (i.e. from more than one, viz., the מחנה שכינה) except a person with a running issue and a man who had experienced a seminal emission (who were expelled from the מחנה שכינה and מחנה לויה), and a leper (who had to remain outside all three) (cf. Pesachim 67a).
וטמא הכהן עד הערב [AND AFTERWARDS HE SHALL COME INTO THE CAMP] AND THE PRIEST SHALL BE UNCLEAN UNTO THE EVENING — Invert its order (that of the phrases forming this half of the verse), and then explain it: He shall be unclean until the evening and afterwards he shall come into the camp (cf Rashi Leviticus 11:32 and Note thereon).

Verse 8

Verse 9

והניח מחוץ למחנה AND HE SHALL LAY THEM UP WITHOUT THE CAMP — He divided it (the ashes) into three portions: one he placed on Mount Olivet, another was divided between all the priestly divisions, and the other he placed in the חיל (the space that surrounded the Temple area) (Sifrei Bamidbar 124:1; Mishnah Parah 3:11). That portion given to the priestly divisions was outside the forecourt, so that the inhabitants of the cities and anyone who required to be cleansed might take of it; as for that which was on the Mount of Olives, the High Priests purified themselves by means of it for preparing other "red cows", whilst that which was in the space surrounding the Temple area was placed there to be kept for all times by special enactment of Scripture, as it is said, "and it shall be kept for the congregation of the children of Israel" (cf. Tosefta Parah 3 8).
למי נדה FOR WATERS OF נדה — i.e. for waters of sprinkling (or casting); similar are, (Lamentations 3:53) "and they cast (וידו) a stone upon me"; (Zechariah 2:4) "to cast down (לידות) the horns of the nations", both of which are expressions denoting "casting".
חטאת הוא IT IS A PURIFICATION FROM SIN — This, according to its literal meaning, is an expression denoting "purification", but from the point of view of the Halachot to which it is to be subject Scripture terms it a חטאת, "sin-offering", to state by so doing that it is similar to holy

things — that it is prohibited for any other use (cf. Sifrei Bamidbar 124:2; Menachot 51b).

Verse 10

Verse 11

Verse 12

הוא יתחטא בו HE SHALL PURIFY HIMSELF WITH IT — with this ash.

Verse 13

במת בנפש [HE WHO TOUCHES] A DEAD BODY OF ANY PERSON — And what dead body is here intended? That of a human being (נפש האדם), the addition of בנפש האדם serving to exclude the person (body) of an animal, so intimating that uncleanness caused by it does not require sprinkling for its removal. Another explanation of בנפש is, that this term refers to a quarter of a log of blood (this being regarded as the minimum quantity necessary for maintaining life in a human being) (Chullin 72a).
את משכן ה' הוא טמא HE DEFILES THE TABERNACLE OF THE LORD, if he enters the forecourt even though after having immersed himself, but without having been sprinkled on the third and seventh days,
עוד טמאתו בו HIS UNCLEANNESS IS YET UPON HIM, although he has immersed himself.

Verse 14

כל הבא אל האהל ALL THAT COMETH INTO THE TENT, whilst the dead body is within it, shall be unclean seven days.

Verse 15

וכל כלי פתוח AND EVERY OPEN VESSEL — Scripture is speaking of an earthen vessel which is not receptive of uncleanness by an unclean thing touching its exterior but only by it being in its interior (even without contact with the interior walls; cf. Rashi on Leviticus 11:33); therefore if the cover that forms its lid is not well joined to it by a perfect contact, it (the vessel) becomes unclean; but if the lid is joined upon it, it is clean, whilst metal vessels would in any case become unclean, whether they are closed or not, since they are receptive of uncleanness whether an unclean object touches them on their inside or on their outside (Chullin 25a).
פתיל is an expression denoting “joined” in the Arabic language. Similar is (Genesis 30:8; cf. Rashi thereon), נפתולי אלהים נפתלתי, “By bonds of God I have joined myself (נפתלתי) with my sister."

Verse 16

על פני השדה [AND EVERYTHING WHICH TOUCHES] ON THE OPEN FIELD — Our Rabbis explained that this is intended to include the upper board and the side board of a coffin (which were on the surface of the field — that these, too, render a person unclean) (Chullin 72a). The literal meaning of the words על פני השדה is, however, that even where there is no אהל, covering, there too, the dead body may cause uncleanness, but only by contact with it.

Verse 17

Verse 18

Verse 19

וחטאו ביום השביעי AND HE SHALL PURIFY HIM ON THE SEVENTH DAY — This is the completion of his purification (cf. Sifrei Bamidbar 129:2).

Verse 20

ואיש אשר יטמא וגו׳ AND THE MAN THAT IS UNCLEAN [AND DOES NOT PURIFY HIMSELF … HATH DEFILED THE SANCTUARY OF THE LORD] — If the Sanctuary is mentioned why is the Tabernacle also mentioned (in v. 13 "he hath defiled the Tabernacle of the Lord")? etc., as is set forth in Treatise Shevuot 16b.

Verse 21

ומזה מי הנדה AND HE THAT SPRINKLED THE WATER OF SPRINKLING [SHALL WASH HIS GARMENTS] — Our Rabbis said that the one who sprinkles remains clean, and this statement is intended to intimate that one who bears the waters of purification becomes unclean with a more stringent uncleanness, in that he renders unclean the garments that are upon him (for it states here that he shall wash his garments), which is not so in the case of one who only touches these waters. And this fact that it here expresses it (the idea of "bearing the waters") by the term "he that sprinkles" is only to tell you that they (the waters) do not render a person who bears them unclean unless they contain a quantity capable of being sprinkled (Yoma 14a).
והנגע…יטמא AND HE THAT TOUCHETH … SHALL BE UNCLEAN, but does not require washing of his garments.

Verse 22

וכל אשר יגע בו הטמא AND WHATSOEVER THE UNCLEAN PERSON TOUCHETH — i.e., this unclean person who has become unclean by reason of a corpse, SHALL TOUCH, יטמא SHALL BECOME UNCLEAN.
והנפש הנגעת AND THE SOUL THAT TOUCHETH him that hath become unclean by reason of a corpse,
תטמא עד הערב SHALL BE UNCLEAN UNTIL THE EVEN — Here we learn that a corpse is a progenitor of a primary source of uncleanness, and he that touches it becomes a primary source of uncleanness and can render a human being unclean. — This is its explanation (that of the whole chapter) according to what it literally implies and according to the Halachoth connected with it. — A Midrashic explanation I have copied from the work of R. Moses the Preacher, and this is:
ויקחו אליך AND THEY SHALL TAKE UNTO THEE — They shall take from that which is their own: just as they divested themselves of their golden earrings for making of the calf — i.e., of that which was their own, so shall they bring this calf-like animal as an atonement from that which is their own.
פרה אדמה A RED COW — Why this rite was performed with a cow may be exemplified by a parable it may be compared to the case of a handmaid's child that defiled the king's palace. They said: Let the mother come and

wipe up the excrement. Similarly here: since they became defiled by a calf, let its mother (a cow) come and atone for the calf (cf. Midrash Tanchuma, Chukat 8).
אדמה RED — It had to be red in allusion to the idea contained in the text (Isaiah 1:18): "Though they (your sins) be red as scarlet [they shall become as white as snow]" — so you see that sin is termed red.
תמימה PERFECT — in allusion to the Israelites who were perfect but through it (the calf) became morally maimed: let this perfect animal come and atone for them so that they may regain their state of perfection.
לא עלה עליה על [A COW] UPON WHICH NEVER CAME A YOKE — just as they cast off themselves the yoke of Heaven.
אל אלעזר הכהן TO ELEAZAR THE PRIEST — just as they gathered together against Aaron who was a priest to force him to make the golden calf. But because Aaron had made the calf this rite was not entrusted to him that it should be carried out by him, because the prosecuting counsel cannot become the defending counsel (Rosh Hashanah 26a; cf. Rashi on Leviticus 16:4; Aaron who had caused the sin was not a fitting person to atone for it: therefore the rite had to be performed by another priest, viz., by Eleazar).
ושרף את הפרה AND ONE SHALL BURN THE COW, just as the calf was burnt (Exodus 32:20).
עץ ארז ואזוב ושני תולעת CEDAR WOOD AND HYSSOP AND CRIMSON — These three species correspond to the three thousand men who fell by the edge of the sword on account of the golden calf. The cedar is the loftiest of all trees and the hyssop the lowliest of all — a symbol that the man of high position who displays pride and on that account falls into sin should make himself as lowly as the hyssop and the worm (תולעת), and he will then gain atonement.
למשמרת [IT SHALL BE] KEPT [FOR THE CONGREGATION OF THE CHILDREN OF ISRAEL], just as the transgression of the calf is kept in remembrance for all future generations for punishment, for there is no visitation of Israel in which there is not something of the visitation of the sin caused by the calf, as it is said, (Exodus 32:34) "On the day when I visit I will visit [their sin upon them]" (cf. Rashi on that verse, and Sanhedrin 102a; Yerushalmi Taanit 14). And just as the calf rendered unclean everyone who busied himself with it (cf. Avodah Zarah 32b), so, too, does the cow make unclean all who busy themselves with it. And just as they (Israel) were purified by its dust (Exodus 22:20), similarly it states, (v. 17) "And for an unclean person shall they take of the dust of the burnt cow of purification, etc."

Chapter 20

Verse 1

כל העדה [THE CHILDREN OF ISRAEL], EVEN THE WHOLE CONGREGATION — The congregation in its entirety, for those who were to die in the wilderness in consequence of their sin had already died, but these had been expressly mentioned for life (cf. Rashi on v. 22).
ותמת שם מרים AND MIRIAM DIED THERE — Why is the section narrating the death of Miriam placed immediately after the section treating of the red cow? To suggest to you the following comparison: What is the purpose of the sacrifices? They effect atonement! So, too, does the death of the righteous effect atonement! (Moed Katan 28a).
ותמת שם מרים AND MIRIAM DIED THERE — She, too, as Moses and Aaron, died by a Divine Kiss. But why is it not said with reference to her: she died "by the command (lit., mouth) of God", (this being the Biblical expression from which is derived the Midrashic statement that they died

by the Divine Kiss)? Because this would not be a respectful way of speaking about the Most High God, as it would have reference to a woman. But of Aaron it says in the Sedrah אלה מסעי (Numbers 33:38), "By the mouth of the Lord" (Moed Katan 28a).

Verse 2

ולא היה מים לעדה AND THERE WAS NO WATER FOR THE CONGREGATION — Since this statement follows immediately after the mention of Miriam's death, we may learn from it that during the entire forty years they had the "well" through Miriam's merit (Taanit 9a).

Verse 3

ולו גועֲנו — means, WOULD THAT WE HAD DIED.
בגוע אחינו means, by the death of our brethren — i.e., by the pestilence. This tells us that death by thirst is worse than that (i.e., than death by pestilence).
בגוע — This is a noun and means the same as במיתת אחינו, "by the death of our brethren"; and it would not be correct to explain (translate) it: "when our brethren died", for if this were so, it should be voweled to read בְּגָוְעַ.

Verse 4

Verse 5

Verse 6

Verse 7

Verse 8

ואת בעירם [SO SHALT THOU GIVE THE CONGREGATION] AND THEIR BEASTS [TO DRINK] From this we may see that the Holy One, blessed be He, has regard for the possessions of Israel (Menachot 76b; Midrash Tanchuma, Chukat 9).

Verse 9

Verse 10

ויקהלו וגו׳ [AND MOSES AND AARON] ASSEMBLED [THE WHOLE CONGREGATION BEFORE THE ROCK] — This was one of the places where the smaller contained the greater, (the entire congregation being assembled in front of one rock) (Leviticus Rabbah 10:9).
המן הסלע הזה נוציא MUST WE BRING [WATER] OUT OF THIS ROCK? — They said this because they could not distinguish it (the rock intended by God), for the rock from which the water had hitherto flowed during these forty years had vanished and taken a place amongst the other rocks when the "well" disappeared after Miriam's death, and Israel said to them, "What

difference is it to you from which rock you bring forth water for us?" — It was on this account that he (Moses) said unto them (called them) המרים — which may mean "refractory", or, as a Greek expression, "foolish people" (μώροι), or, "such as would teach (מורים) their teachers" — from this rock about which we have received no Divine Command can we bring forth water for you?! (cf. Midrash Tanchuma, Chukat 9).

Verse 11

פעמים [HE SMOTE THE ROCK] TWICE, because at the first attempt it did not bring forth more than a few drops, for God had not bidden him smite it, but He had said, (v. 8) "and ye shall speak to the rock". They had, indeed, spoken, but to a different rock (not that which God had intended) and it had not given forth water. They said, "Perhaps it is necessary to smite it as on the former occasion when it says, (Exodus 17:6) 'and ye shall smite the rock', and just that rock intended by God happened to be there and they smote it [but without full effect, and so they smote it a second time] (cf. Midrash Tanchuma, Chukat 9).

Verse 12

יען לא האמנתם בי BECAUSE YE BELIEVED ME NOT — Scripture discloses the fact that but for this sin alone, they would have entered the land of Canaan, in order that people should not say of them, "Even as the sin of the generation of the Wilderness (a term used of those who left Egypt) on whom it was decreed that they should not enter the Land was the sin of Moses and Aaron" (cf. Rashi on Numbers 27:13). But was not the doubting question (cf. Rashi on Numbers 11:22), "shall the sheep and oxen be slaughtered for them?" a more grievous lack of faith in God than this? But because that had been said in private (no Israelites being present and therefore it could have no evil influence upon them), Scripture (God) spared him (and did not make his lack of faith public by pronouncing punishment for it), but here, where all Israel were standing by, Scripture does not spare him because of the Hallowing of the Divine Name (cf. Midrash Tanchuma, Chukat 10).
להקדישני TO SANCTIFY ME — For had you spoken to the rock and it had brought forth water I would have been sanctified before the whole congregation, for they would have said: What is the case with this rock which cannot speak and cannot hear and needs no maintenance? It fulfils the bidding of the Omnipresent God! How much more should we do so?
לכן לא תביאו THEREFORE YE SHALL NOT BRING — This expression ("therefore") is used by way of an oath, just as (I Samuel 3:14), "Therefore I have sworn to the house of Eli". Here He was quick to take an oath in order that they should not pray at length about it (that He should withdraw the decree) (Midrash Tanchuma, Vaera 2).

Verse 13

המה מי מריבה THESE ARE THE WATERS OF MERIBAH — These are they that were alluded to, though unwittingly, on another occasion: these it was that Pharaoh's astrologers foresaw, saying that Israel's deliverer would be punished through water. On that account they decreed (Exodus 1:22) "Every son that is born shall ye cast into the river" (Sanhedrin 101b).
ויקדש בם AND HE WAS SANCTIFIED IN THEM — For Moses and Aaron died on account of them (cf. Targum Jonathan on). When the Holy One, blessed be He, executes judgement upon those who are holy to Him he is revered and sanctified by mankind. Similarly does it state, (Psalms 68:36) "Revered art Thou when Thou showest Thyself אלהים, Judge, in consequence of thy hallowed ones"; and similarly, too, does it state, (Leviticus 10:3)

“Through those that draw near unto me shall I be sanctified” (see Rashi on that verse; Zevachim 115b).

Verse 14

אחיך ישראל THY BROTHER ISRAEL — What reason had he to mention here their brotherhood? But in effect he said to him: We are brothers, sons of Abraham to whom it was said, (Genesis 15:13) “know for a surety that thy seed shall be a stranger [in a land not theirs]”, and upon both of us, being of Abraham’s seed, was the duty of paying that debt (Midrash Tanchuma, Chukat 12).
אתה ידעת את כל התלאה THOU KNOWEST ALL THE TRAVAIL — It was on this account that your father separated himself from our father, as it is said, (Genesis 36:6), "And he (Esau) went to another land on account of Jacob, his brother” — on account of the bond which devolved upon both of them, and he cast the whole of it upon Jacob (Genesis Rabbah 82:13; cf. Rashi on Genesis 36.7.2).

Verse 15

וירעו לנו AND [THE EGYPTIANS] DID EVIL TO US — we have borne many adversities.
ולאבתינו [THEY DID EVIL TO US] AND TO OUR FATHERS — From here we may learn that the patriarchs grieve in their graves when punishment comes upon Israel (cf. Midrash Tanchuma, Chukat 12).

Verse 16

וישמע קלנו HE HEARD OUR VOICE — through the blessing with which our father, Jacob, had blessed us — “the voice is Jacob’s voice” (Genesis 27:22), because whenever we cry we are answered (Midrash Tanchuma, Beshalach 9 on בשלח).
מלאך A MESSENGER (or an angel) — This was Moses; from this we may learn that the prophets are termed “angel”; so, too, it says, (II Chronicles 36:16) “And they grieved the angels (מלאכי) of God” (Leviticus Rabbah 1:1).

Verse 17

נעברה נא בארצך LET US PASS, I PRAY THEE, THROUGH THY COUNTRY — You have no right to lay claim to the land of Israel as an inheritance, just the same as you have not paid the debt (see Rashi v. 14); render us therefore a little assistance by permitting us to pass through your land.
ולא נשתה מי באר NEITHER WILL WE DRINK OF THE WATER OF THE SPRINGS — He should have said “water of the cisterns (בורות)”; but this was what Moses meant to say: Although we have manna to eat, and a well of which to drink, (that which followed them through the wilderness), we will not drink of it, but we will buy food and water from you to your advantage. From here we may learn a rule for a guest (one lodging in an inn): although he has in his possession something to eat, he should yet purchase something from the local tradesman in order to benefit his host (Midrash Tanchuma, Chukat 12).
דרך המלך נלך וגו׳ WE WILL KEEP TO THE KING’S HIGHWAY etc. — we will muzzle our cattle, and so they will not turn aside into the fields on this side or that to eat (Midrash Tanchuma, Chukat 12).

Verse 18

פן בחרב אצא לקראתך LEST I COME OUT AGAINST THEE WITH THE SWORD — You pride yourselves on the “voice” which your father bequeathed you as a

blessing, saying, "And we cried unto the Lord and He heard our voice" (cf. Rashi on v. 16); I, therefore, will come out against you with that which my father bequeathed me when he said, (Genesis 27:40) "And by thy sword shalt thou live" (Midrash Tanchuma, Beshalach 9 on בשלח)

Verse 19

רק אין דבר lit., ONLY NO THING — i.e., nothing will do you any harm.

Verse 20

וביד חזקה AND WITH A STRONG HAND — relying upon our ancestors' assurance: (Genesis 27:22) "and the hands are the hands of Esau" (cf. Midrash Tanchuma, Beshalach 9 on בשלח)

Verse 21

Verse 22

כל העדה THE WHOLE CONGREGATION — all of them perfect, and destined to enter the promised land, for among them there was not even one of those upon whom it had been decreed that they should not enter the land, because those who were to die in the wilderness had already ceased to exist, and these belonged to those about whom it is written, (Deuteronomy 4:4) '[But ye who did cleave to the Lord your God] are all of you alive this day" (Midrash Tanchuma, Chukat 14)
הר ההר MOUNT HOR (more lit., the mount of the mount) — This was a mount on top of a mount, like a small apple on top of a large apple. — Although the cloud went before them and levelled the mountains (cf. Rashi on 10:34), yet three of them remained: Mount Sinai for the giving of the Torah, Mount Hor for Aaron's burial place, and Mount Nebo for Moses' burial place (Midrash Tanchuma, Chukat 14).

Verse 23

על גבול ארץ אדום BY THE BOUNDARY OF THE LAND OF EDOM — This (the statement that Aaron died here) tells us that because they here wished to join themselves in close friendship with the wicked, a breach was made in their works and they had to lose this righteous man, Aaron. Similarly does the prophet say, (II Chronicles 20:37) "Because thou hast joined thyself with Ahaziah, the Lord hath made a breach in thy works" (Midrash Tanchuma, Chukat 14).

Verse 24

Verse 25

קח את אהרן TAKE AARON by consoling words — say to him: Happy art thou that thou wilt see thy crown being given to thy son, something to which I am not privileged (Midrash Tanchuma, Chukat 17).

Verse 26

את בגדיו [AND STRIP AARON OF] HIS GARMENTS — i.e., the garments of the high priesthood. — He clothed him in these and stripped them off him to place them on his son in his presence. He (Moses) said to him (Aaron),

"Enter the cave", and he entered. — He saw a bed already made (more lit., outspread, i.e., with its sheets, etc.) and a light burning. He said to him, "Ascend the bed", and he ascended. — "Stretch out your hands", and he stretched them out. — "Close your mouth", and he closed it. — "Close your eyes", and he closed them. At that moment Moses longed for that self-same death, and this is what was said to him (Deuteronomy 32:50), "[And die] … as Aaron thy brother died" — the death, for which you longed (Siphre on that verse).

Verse 27

וישׂ משה AND MOSES DID [AS THE LORD COMMANDED] — Although this thing was hard for him he did not delay to do so (Midrash Tanchuma, Chukat 17).

Verse 28

Verse 29

ויראו כל העדה AND ALL THE CONGREGATION SAW [THAT AARON HAD DIED] — When they saw Moses and Eleazar descending and that Aaron was not descending with them, they said, "Where, then, is Aaron?" — He replied to them, "He is dead!" They thereupon said, "Is it possible that a man who stood up against the Angel and stayed the plague, — that over him the Angel of Death should have power?!" — Moses at once offered prayer and the ministering angels showed him (Aaron) to them lying upon the bier. They saw and believed (cf. Midrash Tanchuma, Chukat 17).
כל בית ישראל [THEY WEPT FOR AARON …] EVEN ALL THE HOUSE OF ISRAEL — all: both men and women, because Aaron used to pursue peace and promoted love between contending parties, and between man and wife (cf. The Fathers According to Rabbi Nathan 12).
כי גוע THAT (or because) HE HAD DIED — I say that he who translates these words in the Targum (i.e., anyone who holds that this is the correct rendering) by דהא מית, "because he had died", is in error unless he also translates in the Targum the word ויראו by ואתחזיאו "they were seen (exposed)", for our Rabbis stated that this word כי is used here in the sense of "because" only in accordance with a Midrash which relates that the clouds of glory which hitherto enveloped Israel disappeared at Aaron's death, (so that all the congregation were now exposed to the sight of their enemies), and in accordance with what R. Abuhu said (Rosh Hashanah 3a), "Read here not וַיִּרְאוּ but וַיֵּרָאוּ, "they were seen". It is to this sense of the verb that the meaning of "because" is applicable to the word כי, since that gives the reason for what precedes it: Why were they seen? Because, behold, Aaron had died, and the clouds disappeared. But to the translation in the Targum, וחזו כל כנשתא ("and all the congregation saw"), the meaning of "because" (for the word כי) is not applicable, but only the meaning אשר, "that", which is one of the usages of the word אי (the Aramaic equivalent of אם, which itself is one of the four classifications of the usage of כי; see ibid). For we find אם used in the sense of אשר "that", as e.g., (Job 21:4) "so that (ואם) why should I not be impatient?" And many passages where אם occurs may be explained in this sense, as (Job 14:5), "that (אם) his days are determined".

Chapter 21

Verse 1

וישמע הכנעני AND THE CANAANITE HEARD — He heard that Aaron had died and that the clouds of glory had disappeared and he believed that now he was at liberty to wage war against Israel, as it is related in Rosh Hashana 3a; Amalek was from olden times a whip for chastising Israel — always held in readiness to be God's agent for Israels punishment (Midrash Tanchuma, Chukat 18).
יושב הנגב THE INHABITANT OF THE SOUTH COUNTRY — This was Amalek,as it is said, (Numbers 13:29), "Amalek was the inhabitant of the south country". But he purposely changed his speech, talking in the "Canaanite" tongue, so that Israel might thereby be misled and would pray to the Holy One, blessed be He, that he should give the Canaanites into their power, whilst really they were not Canaanites, and their prayer would be ineffectual against the Amalakites. But Israel perceived that their clothing was as the clothing of Amalakites whilst their language was the language of Canaan; they thereupon said, "Let us pray against our enemies in general terms (without mention of any name), as it is stated (v. 2) that they said, "if Thou wilt indeed give this people into my hand".
דרך האתרים BY WAY OF ATHARIM — by way of the south country by which the spies (תרים) had gone, as it is said, (Numbers 13:22) "and they went up by the south country". Another explanation of דרך האתרים is: By the way of the Great Searcher (the Ark) which used to journey in front of them, as it is said, (Numbers 10:33) "[and the Ark of the Covenant of the Lord went before them] in the three days' journey to search out (לתור) a resting-place for them" (Midrash Tanchuma, Chukat 14).
וישב ממנו שבי (more lit.,) AND CAPTURED FROM THEM A CAPTIVE — it was only one maid servant (Yalkut Shimoni on Torah 764).

Verse 2

והחרמתי means I WILL DEDICATE their spoil (that of the cities) to the Most High.

Verse 3

ויחרם אתהם AND HE DOOMED THEM by slaughter,
ואת עריהם AND THEIR CITIES as things dedicated to the Most High.

Verse 4

דרך ים סוף BY THE WAY OF THE RED SEA — As soon as Aaron died and this war came upon them they turned back on the way to the Red Sea; this was the way on which they had turned back when there had been enacted against them the decree that they must wander in the wilderness in consequence of their murmuring after having received the report of the spies, as it is said, (Deuteronomy 1:40), "And take your journey into the wilderness by the way to the Red Sea". Here they went back seven stages, as it is said, (Deuteronomy 10:6), "And the children of Israel journeyed from Beeroth-bene-jaakan to Moserah; there Aaron died". But did he really die at Moserah; was it not at Mount Hor that he died?" But the explanation is, that there (at Moserah) they again mourned and lamented for him just as though he there lay dead before them. Go and examine the list of the stages (Numbers 33:31—37) and you will find that there are seven stages from Moserah to Mount Hor (Midrash Tanchuma, Chukat 18).
לסבב את ארץ אדום TO GO ROUND THE LAND OF EDOM — to go round it, because they would not permit them to pass through their land.
ותקצר נפש העם בדרך AND THE SOUL OF THE PEOPLE WAS MUCH DISCOURAGED BECAUSE OF THE WAY — because of the difficulties of the journey which were so hard for them. They said: Now we are close enough to enter the land, and yet we have to turn back. Just so had our fathers to turn back and they stayed in the wilderness thirty eight years until this day. —

Consequently their soul became discouraged because of the hardship of the journey. In O. F., En cure del tour. — It would not be correct to say that ותקצר נפש העם בדרך means "[and the soul of the people was discouraged] while they were on the journey" and that it (the text) does not explain what it was discouraged through, for in every passage in Scripture where you find the phrase "the soul being discouraged", it is there explained through what it became discouraged (the preposition ב being prefixed to the word that expresses the cause of discouragement). For example, (Zechariah 11:8) "And my soul became impatient of them (בהם)", and, for example, (Judges 10:16): "And His soul became impatient with the enemies on account of the misery (בעמל) they inflicted upon Israel". To anything that is hard for a man to bear the expression "the shortening of soul" (קצור נפש) is applicable - he is like a person upon whom trouble comes and his mind is not large enough to contain that matter and there is no room in his heart for that worry to abide there. Of the thing that causes the trouble the term "large" is used, denoting that it is too huge and heavy for a person. For example, (Zechariah 11:8) וגם נפשם בחלה בי, which signifies "(And also their souls] were great upon Me"; (Job. 10:16), "And it becomes large (it is a burden to Thee) even that Thou huntest me as though I were a lion". (See Rashi on these verses and on Niddah 47a). To sum up the explanation: the phrase "shortening of the soul through a thing" signifies that one cannot bear it — that the mind cannot bear it.

Verse 5

באלהים ובמשה [AND THE PEOPLE SPAKE] AGAINST GOD AND AGAINST MOSES — They placed the servant on a par with his Master (Midrash Tanchuma, Chukat 19).
למה העליתנו WHEREFORE HAVE YE BROUGHT US UP — "ye": they (God and Moses) were both on a par to them.
ונפשנו קצה AND OUR SOUL LOATHETH — This, too, is an expression for "the shortening of soul" and "rejecting" (not being able to bear the trouble).
בלחם הקלקל THIS LIGHT BREAD — because the manna was miraculously absorbed into their limbs (and was not execrated) they derisively called it "light". They said: this manna will at some time or other swell up in our stomachs, for is there any mortal (lit., anyone born of woman) who takes in food and does not eject it? (Yoma 75b; cf. Rashi on Avodah Zarah 5b).

Verse 6

את הנחשים השרפים BURNING SERPENTS — so termed because they burn (cause fever in) a person through the poison of their fangs.
וינשכו את העם AND THEY BIT THE PEOPLE — God said, as it were: Let the serpent which was punished for slanderous statements come and exact punishment from those who utter slander. — Let the serpent to which all kinds of food have one taste (that of earth; cf. Genesis 3:14 and Yoma 75a) come and exact punishment from these ingrates to whom one thing (the manna) had the taste of many different dainties (see Rashi 11:8) (Midrash Tanchuma, Chukat 19).

Verse 7

ויתפלל משה AND MOSES PRAYED — From this we may learn that he of whom one seeks forgiveness should not be so cruel as not to forgive (cf. Midrash Tanchuma, Chukat 19).

Verse 8

על נס means [SET IT] UPON A POLE which is termed perche in O. F. Similar is, (Isaiah 30:17) "And like a polo (banner) upon the hill"; (Isaiah 49:22) "I will lift up my pole (banner)"; (Isaiah 13:3) "Lift up a banner." Because it is lofty so that it can serve as a sign and as evidence of something it is called נס, something raised on high (cf. Rashi on Exodus 20:17).
כל הנשוך ANYONE THAT IS BITTEN — even though a dog or ass had bitten him, he felt the effects of the injury and became enfeebled more and more (cf. Tanchuma); only that the bite of a serpent kills more speedily. On this account it is stated here: וראה אתו, "whoever has been bitten, when he seeth it, [shall live]" — a mere glance sufficed to heal him. But in the case of the serpent's bite it is stated והביט, and he gazed — "and it came to pass that if a serpent had bitten any man, when he gazed [at the brazen serpent, he lived]", for the serpent's bite was not so quick to heal unless he gazed intently (cf. Jerusalem Talmud Rosh Hashanah 3:9). — Our Rabbis said: But could the copper serpent cause death or life?! But the explanation is that when the Israelites in gazing at the serpent looked up on high and subjected their hearts to their Father in Heaven, they were healed, but if they did not do this they waste away (Rosh Hashanah 29a).

Verse 9

נחש נחשת A SERPENT OF COPPER — He had not been told to make it of copper, but Moses said, "The Holy One, blessed be He, terms it נחש; I will therefore make it of נחשת — one term fitting the other term" (Genesis Rabbah 31:8).

Verse 10

Verse 11

בעיי העברים IN IJE-ABARIM (in the עיים of Abarim) — I do not know why the name (that of these places) was called עיים, for the term עי signifies ruins; it is a thing (spot) that has been swept as it were with a broom. Only the single letter ע in it belongs to the root; it is connected in meaning with יעים (Exodus 27:3) and (Isaiah 28:17) "And the hail shall sweep away (יעה).
העברים (from עבר to pass) — the road forming a pass for those who at that spot pass by Mount Nebo on their way to the land of Canaan, which mount separates the land of Moab from the land of the Amorites....
על פני מואב ממזרח השמש [IN THE WILDERNESS WHICH IS] BEFORE MOAB TOWARDS THE SUN-RISING (the East) — i.e., to the East of the land of Moab (not in the East of the world).

Verse 12

Verse 13

מגבל האמרי The word גבול denotes boundary-line of (marking) the end of their frontier. Similar is the term the גבול of Moab (in this verse): it is an expression for extremity and end.
מעבר ארנון ON THE OTHER SIDE OF ARNON — they travelled round the land of Moab along the whole of its southern and eastern sides until they came to the other side of the Arnon into the land of the Amorites on the north of the land of Moab.

הֵיצֵא מִגְּבוּל הָאֱמֹרִי [ARNON WHICH IS IN THE WILDERNESS] THAT COMETH OUT OF THE BOUNDARY OF THE AMORITES — a strip of land jutted out from the territory of the Amorites — it belonged to the Amorites — and entered into the territory of Moab extending unto the Arnon which is the boundary of Moab. It was there that the Israelites encamped and thus they did not pass into the territory of Moab, כִּי אַרְנוֹן גְּבוּל מוֹאָב, FOR ARNON IS THE BOUNDARY OF MOAB, and they did not grant them permission to pass through their land. And although Moses did not state this plainly, Jephtha plainly stated it], as Jephtha said, (Judges 11:17) "And in like manner he sent unto the king of Moab, out he would not permit him to pass through his territory". Moses, however, made an allusion to it when he stated, (Deuteronomy 2:29) "As the children of Esau that dwell in Seir, and the Moabites that dwell in Ar, did unto me". What was the case with these (the children of Esau)? They did not permit them to pass through their land, but they made them travel right round it! Similarly, too, Moab did!

Verse 14

עַל כֵּן יֵאָמֵר WHEREFORE IT IS SAID (more lit., about this it will be said) — About this encampment and the miracles that were wrought at it, it will be told בְּסֵפֶר מִלְחֲמוֹת ה׳ IN THE NARRATIVE (lit., THE BOOK) OF THE WARS OF THE LORD — whenever people narrate the miracles that were wrought for our fathers they will declare אֶת וָהֵב.
אֶת וָהֵב — is equivalent to אֶת יָהֵב; just as from the root יעד one may say וָעֵד, so from יהב, "to give" one may say והב: the ו is a root-letter. It means to say: they will relate what (אֶת) He gave (וָהֵב) to them (i.e. what boons He gave to them) and how He did many miracles at the Red Sea (בְּיַם סוּף being the equivalent of בְּסוּפָה in the text).
וְאֶת הַנְּחָלִים אַרְנוֹן AND THE VALLEYS AT ARNON — Just as they relate the miracles at the Red Sea, so there should be related, too, the miracles at the valleys of Arnon, for here, also, great miracles were wrought (Midrash Tanchuma, Chukat 20). And what were those miracles? (the reply is given in the next passage).

Verse 15

וְאֲשֶׁר הַנְּחָלִים THE DISCHARGE IN THE VALLEYS — The Targum translation of,שִׁפְכָּא "pouring forth", is אֲשֶׁר. Consequently these words signify "the pouring forth in the valleys", for at that place there was poured forth the blood of the Amorites who had concealed themselves there. As the mountains were high and the valley deep and narrow, and the mountains were so close to one another, that a man could stand upon the mountain on one side and speak to his fellow on the other mountain, and the road passed through the valley, the Amorites said: When the Israelites are about to enter the land by passing through the valley we will come out of the mountain caves above them and will kill them by arrows and stone missiles. Now those caves were in the mountains on the Moabite side, and on the mountain that was on the Amorite side there were, opposite those caves, projections like horns and breasts jutting out. When Israel were on the point of passing, the mountain that was located in the land of Israel (that on the Amorite side which afterwards came into the possession of the Israelites) was set in tremor as a handmaid that goes forth to receive her mistress, and moved nearer to the mountain of Moab, and these breast-like projections penetrated into the caves and killed them (the Amorites who were hidden in them). And this is the meaning of אֲשֶׁר נָטָה לְשֶׁבֶת עָר which inclineth towards the dwelling (location) of Ar (the capital Moab) — which means that the mountain inclined from its place and approached close to the mountain on the Moabite side and affixed itself to it: and this, too, is the meaning of וְנִשְׁעַן לִגְבוּל מוֹאָב, and leaneth towards the boundary of Moab (Midrash Tanchuma, Chukat 20; cf. Berakhot 54b).

Verse 16

ומשם בארה AND FROM THENCE TO THE WELL — from there the flow of blood ran to the well. How? The Holy One, blessed be He, said: Who will inform my children of those miracles? — The proverb says: If you have given bread to a child let its mother know (i.e., since the mother has, to an extent, benefitted by this, and the child cannot tell her, you should do so) (Shabbat 10b). After they (the Israelites) had passed by, the mountains returned to their original positions, and the well that followed the Israelites flowed down into the valley and brought up from there the blood and the arms and other limbs of those who had been thus killed, and carried them around the camp, so that Israel saw them, and they sang a song of triumph, as follows (Midrash Tanchuma, Chukat 20):

Verse 17

עלי באר COME UP, WELL from the valley and bring up what you have to bring up! — Whence do we know that it was the well that announced to them these miracles as it is stated above? Because it is said: ומשם בארה "and from there to the well". For you cannot say that it means: "from that place was (they got) the well", because was it indeed from there that they got it? Had it not been with them from the beginning of the forty years' wanderings? But it means that from there it flowed down to the Israelites to proclaim the miracles! Then again, also, the paragraph beginning with the words: אז ישיר … השירה הזאת were spoken at the end of the forty years whilst the well was given them at the beginning of the forty, and what reason then can there be to write it as late as here. But the subject of the song has to be explained in connection with what precedes it (that it was a summons to the well to bring up the bodies of the slain) (Midrash Tanchuma, Chukat 20).

Verse 18

באר חפרוה THE WELL, [PRINCES] DIGGED IT means: This is the well which the princes, Moses and Aaron, digged (cf. Targum Jonathan on).
במשענתם means WITH THE STAFF.
וממדבר מתנה AND FROM THE WILDERNESS was it given them [as a מתנה, a gift].

Verse 19

וממתנה נחליאל — Understand this as the Targum does: And after it had been given them, it descended into the valley.

Verse 20

ומבמות הגיא אשר בשדי מואב AND FROM THE HEIGHTS (it descended finally) INTO THE VALLEY THAT IS IN THE FIELD OF MOAB, for there Moses died, and there the well finally ceased to flow. Another explanation is: כרוה נדיבי עם THE NOBLES OF THE PEOPLE HOLLOWED IT — each prince of the tribes when they encamped took his staff and drew a line on the ground from the well to his banner and encampment, and the waters of the well ran by way of that mark and came before the camping place of each tribe (Midrash Tanchuma, Chukat 21).
במחקק THROUGH THE LAWGIVER — by command of Moses who is called the מחוקק, the Lawgiver, as it is said, (Deuteronomy 33:21) "for there is the portion of the lawgiver (Moses' grave) concealed". But why is Moses not expressly mentioned by name in this song? Because he was punished through the well! And since Moses' name is not mentioned, the name of the Holy

One, blessed be He, is also not mentioned. A parable! It may be compared to the case of a king whom his subjects invited to a feast. He said: If my friend will be there, I, too, will be there, but if not, I will not go (Midrash Tanchuma, Chukat 21).
ראש הפסגה — Understand this as the Targum has it: to the top of the height.
פסגה denotes "high", just as (Psalms 48:14) פסגו ארמנותיה, which means "make high its palaces".
ונשקפה AND IT LOOKS — this height looks towards the place whose name is ישימון, which word describes the wilderness because that is waste (שמם with which the word ישימון may be linguistically associated). Another explanation is: ונשקפה AND IT LOOKS — the well looks על פני ישימון towards the front of ישימון, the wilderness, for it was hid (emptied) itself in the sea of Tiberias, and anyone who stood by the wilderness may look and see a kind of sieve in the sea, and that was the well!. Thus did R. Tanchuma (Midrash Tanchuma, Chukat 21) expound this passage.

Verse 21

וישלח ישראל מלאכים AND ISRAEL SENT MESSENGERS — But in another passage it attributes this embassy to Moses, as it is said, (Deuteronomy 2:26), "And 'I' sent messengers from the wilderness of Kedemoth [to Sihon king of Heshbon]"! And so, too, it states, (Numbers 20:14), "And Moses sent messengers to the king of Edom"; whilst in the story of Jephtha, it says, (Judges 11:17) "And Israel sent messengers to the king of Edom, etc.". Each of these pairs of verses is necessary one to the other (i.e., they supplement each other): one keeps back information and the other discloses it, (more lit., one locks up and the other opens) — you may gather from them that Moses is Israel and Israel is Moses, thus telling you that the prince of any generation is the equal of the whole generation, for the prince is the whole (Midrash Tanchuma, Chukat 23).

Verse 22

אעברה בארצך LET ME PASS THROUGH THY LAND — Although they had not been bidden to open the negotiations with them by an offer of peace yet they first sought peace of them (cf. Midrash Tanchuma, Chukat 22).

Verse 23

לא נתן סיחון וגו׳ AND SIHON WOULD NOT SUFFER [ISRAEL TO PASS THROUGH HIS BOUNDARY] — For all the Canaanite kings paid him tribute, because he protected them that no hostile forces should pass through his land against them. As soon as Israel said to him, "Let me pass through they land", he answered them: "The whole purpose of my dwelling here is to protect them against you, and yet you speak thus!" (Midrash Tanchuma, Chukat 23).
ויצא לקראת ישראל AND HE WENT OUT AGAINST ISRAEL — Even if Heshbon had been full of people as puny as gnats, no human being could have captured it, and if Sihon had been (resided) in a weak village no human being could have overcome him. How much the more was he invincible whilst he dwelt in Heshbon. Therefore the Holy One, blessed be He, said: Why should I trouble My children to all this extent, to besiege each city? He therefore put it into the hearts of all the men of war to go forth from the cities, and they assembled all of them in one spot, and there they fell in battle; from there Israel proceeded to the cities and there were none to resist them, for there were only women and children there (Midrash Tanchuma, Chukat 23).

Verse 24

כי עז FOR [THE BOUNDARY OF THE CHILDREN OF AMMON] WAS STRONG — And what constituted its strength? The warning of the Holy One, blessed be He, who had said to them (the Israelites), (Deuteronomy 2:19), Harass them not, etc.”.

Verse 25

בנתיה (lit., its daughters) — the villages adjacent to it.

Verse 26

והוא נלחם AND HE (SIHON) HAD FOUGHT [AGAINST THE FORMER KING OF MOAB] — Why is it necessary that this should be written? Because it is said (Deuteronomy 2:9), “Harass not Moab”, and Heshbon belonged to Moab (and therefore should not have been attacked), it (Scripture) tells us that Sihon had taken it from them, and through him it (Heshbon) became permissible to Israel as an object of attack (Chullin 60b; Gittin 38a).
מידו means FROM HIS POSSESSION (Bava Metzia 56b).

Verse 27

על כן (more lit., about this) — about this war which Sihon waged against Moab,
יאמרו המשלים THEY THAT SPEAK IN PARABLES SAY — One of these was Balaam of whom it is said, (Numbers 23:7), "And he took up his parable”.
המשלים THEY THAT SPEAK IN PARABLES — The plural המשלים refers to Balaam and his father Beor (see Rashi on Numbers 24:3). They said —
באו חשבון “COME TO HESHBON”, — For Sihon had been unable to capture it, and he went and hired Balaam to curse it, and this is the meaning of what Balak said, (Numbers 22:6) “For I know (by what has already happened) that whomsoever thou blessest is blessed, [and whomsoever thou cursest is cursed]” (Midrash Tanchuma, Chukat 24).
תבנה ותכונן IT WILL BE BUILT UP AND ESTABLISHED, [SIHON’S CITY] — Heshbon will be rebuilt under Sihon’s name to be his city.

Verse 28

כי אש יצאה מחשבון FOR A FIRE WILL GO FORTH FROM HESHBON after Sihon captures it,
אכלה ער מואב IT WILL CONSUME AR OF MOAB — The name of that province was called Ar in the Hebrew language and Lechayath (see the Targum Onkelos) in the Aramaic language.
ער מואב means AR OF MOAB.

Verse 29

אוי לך מואב WOE TO THEE, MOAB — [These are not the words of the historian but those of Balaam and Beor, for] they cursed the Moabites (as they had been hired to do) so that they should be delivered into his (Sihon’s) hands (Midrash Tanchuma, Chukat 24).
כמוש CHEMOSH was the name of Moab’s god.
נתן HE HATH GIVEN [HIS SONS] — The subject of the sentence is to be supplied: HE who gave HATH GIVEN HIS SONS i.e. those of Moab,
פלטים — AS FUGITIVES — as men who flee and attempt to escape from the sword, and his daughters into captivity, etc.

Verse 30

ונירם means their sovreignty.

אבד חשבון עד דיבן means: the sovreignty and the subjugation which Moab had over Heshbon is destroyed from thence. Similar also is the meaning of עד דיבן because the Targum of סר "it hath departed" is עד, so that this phrase means to say, sovreignty hath departed from Dibon. The word ניר denotes the sovreignty and yoke which result from a person's rulership, as, (1 Kings 11:36) "that David Thy servant may always have dominion (ניר) before Me".
ונשים WE HAVE LAID WASTE — The ש has a Dagesh, for the word denotes waste (שמם). Thus say they who speak in parables: ונשים אותם עד נפח which signifies we have laid them waste as far as Nophah.

Verse 31

Verse 32

וישלח משה לרגל את יעזר AND MOSES SENT TO SPY OUT JAAZER — The spies captured it (as the text goes on to state, "and they captured it"). They said: We will not do as the former spies, for we have confidence in the power of Moses' prayer to be able to fight against it (Midrash Tanchuma, Chukat 24).

Verse 33

Verse 34

אל תירא אתו FEAR HIM NOT — God said this concerning Og but not about Sihon (cf v. 23), because Moses feared to wage battle, perhaps the merit of Abraham with whom Og had been associated would stand up (i.e., be an advocate) for him, as it is said, (Genesis 14:13) "And the one who escaped came [and told it to Abraham]" — this was Og who had escaped from the Rephaim whom Chedoladmar and his allies had smitten in Ashoreth Karnaim (Genesis 14:5), as it is said, (Deuteronomy 3:11). "For only Og king of Bashan was left of the remnant of the Rephaim" (cf. Midrash Tanchuma, Chukat 25, Niddah 61a).

Verse 35

ויכו אתו AND THEY SMOTE HIM — Moses slew him, as it is related in Treatise Berakhot, in the chapter beginning הרואה (Berakhot 54b): He tore up a rock covering an area of three Parsang and he hurled it at him.

Chapter 22

Verse 1

Verse 2

וירא בלק... את כל אשר עשה ישראל לאמרי AND BALAK … SAW ALL THAT ISRAEL HAD DONE TO THE AMORITES — He said to his people: Those two kings (Sihon and Og) on whom we relied (see Rashi on Numbers 21:23) could not resist them; how much less can we do so; on this account (because he said this to his

people) ויגר מואב MOAB (the whole people) WAS SORE AFRAID (Midrash Tanchuma, Balak 2).

Verse 3

ויגר is an expression signifying fear, as in (Job. 19:29): "Be ye afraid (גורו)".
ויקץ מואב means they (Moab) were sick of their lives (the expression is similar to קצתי בחיי in Genesis 27:46, being an abbreviated form of it).

Verse 4

אל זקני מדין AND MOAB SAID] TO THE ELDERS OF MIDIAN But did not these (Moab and Midian) always hate one another, just as is stated, (Genesis 36:35) "who had smitten Midian in the country of Moab", from which it is evident that Midian had come against Moab in war? But out of fear of Israel they now made peace between themselves (Midrash Tanchuma, Balak 3; cf. Sanhedrin 105a). And what induced Moab to take counsel of Midian? When they saw that Israel was victorious in a supernatural manner they said: the leader of these people grew up in Midian; let us ask them what is his chief characteristic. They replied to them; "His power lies only in his mouth (in prayer)". Whereupon they said: "Then we must come against them with a man whose power lies in his mouth" (Midrash Tanchuma, Balak 3).
כלחך השור AS THE OX LICKETH — they used this comparison because whatever piece of ground the ox licks has no blessing left in it (cf. Shabbat 140b, 141a; Midrash Tanchuma, Balak 3).
בעת ההוא [BALAK WAS KING OF MOAB] AT THAT TIME — at that time: he was not really entitled to the kingdom; he was actually one of the Midianite princes, but when Sihon died they (the Moabites) appointed him as king over them to meet the needs of the time (Midrash Tanchuma, Balak 4).

Verse 5

פתורה HE SENT TO BALAAM פתורה because he was like a money changer before whom everyone lays coins; similarly all the kings used to send him their letters, asking for his advice. However, according to the literal sense of the text, this was the name of the place (Midrash Tanchuma, Balak 4).
ארץ בני עמו THE LAND OF THE CHILDREN OF HIS PEOPLE — of Balak's people, for he came from there, and this man (Balaam) had prophesied saying to him, "You are destined to be king". — And if you ask: Why did the Holy One blessed be He, let his Shechina rest upon so wicked a heathen, I reply that in order that the heathen peoples should have no excuse to say, "If we had prophets, we would have changed for the better", He raised up prophets for them. Yet they (these prophets) broke down the moral fence of the world, because at first they (the heathens) were fenced in against (they refrained from) immoral living, but this man (Balaam) counselled them to freely offer themselves to prostitution (Midrash Tanchuma, Balak 1; cf. Rashi on Numbers 24:14).
לקרא לו TO CALL HIM — the call was for him, for his benefit; for he (Balak) fixed for him (agreed to pay him) a large sum.
עם יצא ממצרים [THERE IS] A PEOPLE COME OUT FROM EGYPT — and if you ask: What harm does that do you?
הנה כסה את עין הארץ BEHOLD THEY COVER THE FACE OF THE EARTH — Sihon and Og who used to protect us stood up against them, but they slew them (Midrash Tanchuma, Balak 4).
והוא ישב ממלי AND THEY ARE STATIONED OPPOSITE ME — ממלי is written deficient in the ו (the full form is ממולי, so that it may be connected with מול "to cut off") — they are near enough to cut me off. The word is

the same as in (Psalms 118:10): "that I shall cut them off (אמילם)" (Midrash Tanchuma, Balak 4).

Verse 6

נכה בו (this may mean, "we may smite them") I and my people may smite them. — Another explanation is that this is a Mishnaic Hebrew expression as in (Bava Metzia 105b) "he deducts (מנכה) for him something from the price", so that it means: [perhaps I may be able] to reduce them a little in numbers (Midrash Tanchuma, Balak 4).
כי ידעתי וגו׳ FOR I KNOW etc., through the war of Sihon against Moab, because you assisted him to smite Moab (Midrash Tanchuma, Balak 4; cf. Rashi on 21:27).

Verse 7

וקסמים בידם AND DIVINATIONS WERE IN THEIR HANDS — all kinds of divination, in order that he should not say, "I have not got my tools with me". — Another explanation is: this omen (קסם) the elders of Midyan took with them: — they said, "If he comes with us this time, there is something substantial in him, but if he puts us off there is no use of him". — Consequently when he told them, "Stay here tonight", they said, There is no hope in him"; they left him and went away, as it is said, (v. 8) And the princes of Moab stayed with Balaam", but the princes of Midyan went away (Midrash Tanchuma, Balak 5).

Verse 8

לינו פה הלילה LODGE HERE THIS NIGHT — The Holy Spirit rested upon him only at night time, and similarly in the case of all the prophets of the heathen peoples, and similarly He revealed Himself to Laban in a dream at night, as it is said, (Genesis 31:24) "And God came to Laban in a dream of the night" — as a man who comes to his concubine furtively (cf. Leviticus Rabbah 1 13; Rashi on Job 12:4).
כאשר ידבר ה' אלי [AND I WILL GIVE YOU AN ANSWER] AS THE LORD SHALL SPEAK TO ME — If He advises me to go with people such as you I will go with you; but perhaps it is not compatible with His dignity to permit me to go except with princes greater than you.
וישבו — this is an expression for "remaining", (they remained with Balaam).

Verse 9

מי האנשים האלה עמך WHO ARE THESE MEN WITH THEE? — By putting this question He intended to delude him. And indeed he (Balaam) thereupon said: "It seems, then, that there are times when everything is not manifest to Him; His knowledge is not always alike. I will select a time when I can curse and when He will not observe it" (Midrash Tanchuma, Balak 5).

Verse 10

בלק בן צפור וגו׳ BALAK THE SON OF ZIPPOR [KING OF MOAB, HAS SENT TO ME] — Although I am of no importance in Your eyes, I am of importance in the eyes of kings (Midrash Tanchuma, Balak 5).

Verse 11

קבה לי CURSE FOR ME — this is worse than ארה לי, (the expression which Balak had actually used, v. 6), for in the case of this verb it means

that one mentions and pronounces in full [the name of God] when cursing (cf. Rashi on Leviticus 24:16) (Midrash Tanchuma, Balak 5).
וגרשתיו AND I WILL DRIVE THEM OUT, meaning from the world; but Balak had said only, (v. 6) "and I will drive them out from the land": I seek only to make them move away from me. Balaam, however, hated them even more than did Balak (cf.Midrash Tanchuma, Balak 5).

Verse 12

לא תלך עמהם THOU SHALT NOT GO WITH THEM — He said: If so, I will curse them in my own place. Whereupon God answered: לא תאור את העם THOU SHALT NOT CURSE THE PEOPLE. — He said to Him: If so, I will bless them. He replied to him: They do not need your blessing, כי ברוך הוא FOR THEY ARE ALREADY BLESSED. A parable! People say to the hornet: neither any of your honey nor any of your sting! (Midrash Tanchuma, Balak 6).

Verse 13

להלך עמכם [THE LORD REFUSES TO GIVE ME LEAVE] TO GO WITH YOU, but only with princes greater than you. This tells us that he was of a proud nature and he did not wish to divulge that he was under the control of the Omnipresent except in arrogant terms ("God will not permit me to go with you"). Consequently (v. 15), ויוסף עוד בלק "Balak sent yet again [more princes, and more honorable than these] (Midrash Tanchuma, Balak 6).

Verse 14

Verse 15

Verse 16

Verse 17

כי כבד אכבדך מאד FOR I WILL HONOR THEE EXCEEDINGLY — Exceedingly: more than you have ever received as a fee in the past (cf. Rashi Numbers 21:27) will I now give you (Midrash Tanchuma, Balak 6).

Verse 18

מלא ביתו כסף וזהב [IF BALAK WOULD GIVE ME HIS HOUSE] FULL OF SILVER AND GOLD — This tells us that he was avaricious and covetous of other peoples wealth. He said: He ought to give me all his silver and gold, for, behold, he would otherwise have to hire many armies to fight against them. Even then it is doubtful whether he would conquer or not conquer, but "I" would certainly conquer (Midrash Tanchuma, Balak 6).
לא אוכל לעבר I CANNOT GO BEYOND [THE WORD OF THE LORD] — Against his own will he divulged to them that he was under the control of others, and he prophesied here that he would be unable to annul those blessings with which the patriarchs had been blessed by the mouth of God (Midrash Tanchuma, Balak 6).

Verse 19

גם אתם [ABIDE] ALSO YE [HERE] — His mouth tripped him up (unwittingly he spoke the truth): you also in the end will go away disappointed as the former princes (Midrash Tanchuma, Balak 6).
מה יסף WHAT MORE [THE LORD WILL SAY TO ME] — He certainly will not change His words from a blessing to a curse: I only hope that he will not add a further blessing. — He here prophesied that He would in the end give them a further blessing by his agency (Midrash Tanchuma, Balak 6).

Verse 20

אם לקרא לך IF [THE MEN COME] TO CALL THEE — If the call be for you, for your benefit, and you think to take a fee for it.
קום לך אתם ARISE, GO WITH THEM, ואך BUT, in spite of yourself, את הדבר אשר אדבר אליך אתו תעשה THE WORD WHICH I SHALL SPEAK TO THEE, THAT SHALL YOU DO, and, nevertheless, Balaam went (as it is stated in the next verse), for he said: perhaps I may persuade Him and He will agree that I should curse.

Verse 21

ויחבש את אתנו AND HE SADDLED HIS SHE-ASS — From here we may learn that the hatred one bears for a person makes one disregard the rule imposed upon him by his exalted position, for he, himself, not a servant, did the saddling. The Holy One, blessed be He, said: You wicked man! Their ancestor Abraham has already anticipated you in this, as it is said, (Genesis 22:3) "And Abraham rose up early in the morning and saddled his ass") (Midrash Tanchuma, Balak 8; cf. Sanhedrin 105b).
עם שרי מואב [HE WENT] WITH THE PRINCES OF MOAB — his heart alike with their hearts (cf. Midrash Tanchuma, Balak 8).

Verse 22

כי הולך הוא [AND GOD'S ANGER WAS KINDLED] BECAUSE HE WENT — He perceived that the matter was evil in the eyes of the Omni-present and yet he longed to go.
לשטן לו [AND THE ANGEL OF THE LORD STOOD IN THE WAY] FOR AN OBSTRUCTION AGAINST HIM — It was an Angel of Mercy מלאך ה׳, an angel of the Lord,(the designation of God as a God of Mercy), and he wished to deter him from sinning — so that he should not sin and perish (Midrash Tanchuma, Balak 8).
ושני נעריו עמו AND HIS TWO LADS WERE WITH HIM — From here we have a rule for a distinguished personage who is going on a journey, that he should take with him two men to serve him, so that these in turn may serve one another (i.e., act for one another by taking over the other's duties if he must leave his master for a short time) (Midrash Tanchuma, Balak 8). (See Rashi Genesis 22:3).

Verse 23

ותרא האתון AND THE SHE-ASS SAW [THE ANGEL] — but he did not see him, for the Holy One, blessed be He, gave an animal power to see more than the man, for just because he possesses sense his mind would become perturbed if he sees noxious beings.
וחרבו שלופה בידו AND HIS SWORD DRAWN IN HIS HAND — He (God) said: This wicked man has abandoned the tools of his own craft, — for the offensive weapons of the heathen peoples consist in the sword, — and he is attacking them with his mouth which is their metier; I will take his implement and come against him with his own metier. Thus, indeed, was his end (Numbers 31:8): "And Balaam the son of Beor they slew by the sword" (Midrash Tanchuma 4:7:23).

Verse 24

במשעול — Understand this as the Targum does: IN A PATH. And similar is, (1 Kings 20:10) "If the dust of Samaria shall suffice לשעלים" — the dust that attaches itself to the soles of peoples' feet when they walk. And similarly, (Isaiah 40:12) "Who hath measured the water בשעלו" — with his feet and through his walking (as one measures by pacing).
גדר מזה וגדר מזה A FENCE BEING ON THIS SIDE AND A FENCE ON THAT SIDE — The term גדר without further definition is one of stone (and that is why in the next verse it is called a קיר which is a term for a stone wall; cf. Leviticus 14:37—40).

Verse 25

וַתִּלָּחֵץ — the Niphal form denotes that SHE PRESSED HERSELF.
וַתִּלְחַץ — the Kal denotes that SHE PRESSED something else — viz., את רגל בלעם BALAAM'S FOOT.

Verse 26

ויוסף מלאך ה' עובר AND THE ANGEL OF THE LORD WENT FURTHER — went further in front of him — it went on so as to be before him in another spot. It is similar to, (Genesis 33:3) "And he passed in front of them". — And there is a Midrashic explanation in Tanchuma: What reason had he to stand in three places? He (the Angel) showed him (Balaam) symbols referring to the three patriarchs (Midrash Tanchuma, Balak 8).

Verse 27

Verse 28

זה שלש רגלים THESE THREE TIMES — By these words he suggested to him: You seek to root out a nation that celebrates three festivals (שלש רגלים) annually?! (Midrash Tanchuma, Balak 9).

Verse 29

התעללת — Understand this as the Targum does: an expression denoting scorn and disdain — [THOU HAST MADE SPORT OF ME].
לו יש חרב בידי I WOULD THERE WERE A SWORD IN MY HAND — This utterance was a great shame for him in the sight of the princes: this man was going for the purpose of slaying a whole nation by his mouth, and for this animal he required a weapon! (cf. Midrash Tanchuma, Balak 9).

Verse 30

ההסכן הסכנתי — Understand this as the Targum does — HAVE I EVER LEARNT? Similar is, (Job 22:2) "Does a man learn (יסכן) for God's benefit" (see Rashi on this verse). And our Rabbis have explained this verse in the Talmud: They said to him, "What is the reason you are not riding on a horse?" He replied to them: "I have left it in the meadow grass" (i.e., I have put it out to graze). Whereupon the ass exclaimed: Am I not your ass upon whom thou hast ridden from my very youth unto this day?!" (so you see, you have never possessed a horse) — as it is related in Treatise Avodah Zarah 4b.

Verse 31

Verse 32

כי ירט הדרך לנגדי BECAUSE THY WAY IS PERVERSE BEFORE ME — Our Rabbis, the Mishnaic Sages, explain it as an acrostic, יראה she feared when ראתה, she saw, and נטתה she turned aside (Shabbat 105a), because that the journey (הדרך) is לנגדי, is against me, that is to say, to anger me, to affront me. — But according to its literal meaning, it is equivalent to חרד הדרך לנגדי, the word ירט being associated in meaning with רטט, "rapid movement" (cf. 49:24). The phrase therefore signifies: for I have seen the man who is taking the journey (Balaam) that he hastened and hurried on the journey, which was taken to my anger and to my despite. It is an elliptical verse (the words בעל הדרך being omitted after ירט), just as (II Samuel 13:39) "And the soul of David longed" (the word נפש being omitted). Another explanation is: ירט is an expression denoting "being pleased". Similar is, (Job 16:11) "Through the wicked יירטני" — i.e., He appeases and comforts me through the wicked, whilst indeed they do nought but annoy me (Midrash Tanchuma, Balak 9).

Verse 33

אולי נטתה — This is the same as לולא: UNLESS SHE HAD [TURNED ASIDE]. Sometimes אולי is used in the sense of לולא "unless".
גם אתכה הרגתי SURELY NOW ALSO THEE HAD I SLAIN — This is an inverted sentence, and it is the same as גם הרגתי אותך — I would also have slain thee, as much as to say: not only would this delay have happened to you through me, but death also.
ואותה החייתי AND IT WOULD I HAVE KEPT ALIVE — but now because it spoke and rebuked you andyou could not stand against its rebuke, — just as it is written, "and he said, No!" — I have killed it in order that people should not be able to say: This is the animal that silenced Balaam by its rebuke, so that he could not reply. For God has regard for human dignity. Similar is (Leviticus 20:16): "And thou shalt slay the woman and the animal (with which sin was committed)", and similarly Leviticus 20:15): "And the animal shalt thou slay" (Midrash Tanchuma, Balak 9).

Verse 34

כי לא ידעתי FOR I KNEW NOT — This statement, too, (cf. v. 29), was a disgrace for him, for in spite of himself he had to admit it — because he used to boast that he knew the will of of the Most High (24:16) and now his own mouth bore testimony: "I knew not" (Midrash Tanchuma, Balak 10).
אם רע בעיניך אשובה לי IF IT BE EVIL IN THINE EYES, I WILL RETURN — To set himself in opposition to the Omnipresent was the purpose of this reply. He said, in effect, "He Himself commanded me to go, and you, angel, annul His words. He is accustomed to this — that He says something and an angel recalls it. He said to Abraham, (Genesis 22:2) Take now thy son, etc.' and by an angel annulled His words. I, too: "If it be evil in thine eyes, then I must return" (Midrash Tanchuma, Balak 10).

Verse 35

לך עם האנשים GO WITH THE MEN — On that road which a man is resolved to go, he is allowed to go (Makkot 10b).
לך עם האנשים GO WITH THE MEN — for thy lot is with them, for in the end you will perish from the world.
ואפס BUT — in spite of yourself, את הדבר אשר אדבר וגו׳ THE WORD THAT I SHALL SPEAK [TO THEE, THAT THOU SHALT SPEAK].

עם שרי בלק [SO BALAAM WENT] WITH THE PRINCES OF BALAK — he was glad to curse them, even as they were (see Rashi v. 21) (Midrash Tanchuma, Balak 10).

Verse 36

וישמע בלק AND BALAK HEARD [THAT BALAAM WAS COMING] — He sent messengers to announce this to him.
אל עיר מואב [AND HE WENT TOWARDS HIM] UNTO THE CITY OF MOAB — to his metropolis, the most important city he had, as much as to say: See what these Israelites wish to exterminate (Midrash Tanchuma, Balak 10).

Verse 37

האמנם לא אוכל כבדך AM I NOT ABLE INDEED TO HONOUR YOU — He prophesied unwittingly that he (Balaam) would eventually leave him in disgrace (Midrash Tanchuma, Balak 10).

Verse 38

Verse 39

קרית חצות — a city (קריה) full of streets (חצות), — men and women and children thronging the streets, as much as to say: Look and have pity that these should not be exterminated (Midrash Tanchuma, Balak 11).

Verse 40

בקר וצאן THE HERD AND FLOCK — a small matter (one ox and one sheep, nothing in comparison with what he had promised him) (Midrash Tanchuma, Balak 11).

Verse 41

במות בעל BAMOTH-BAAL — Understand this as the Targum does: to the heights of his god (more lit., of that which he reverenced); Baal is the name of a god.

Chapter 23

Verse 1

Verse 2

Verse 3

לקראתי אולי יקרה ה' PERHAPS THE LORD WILL HAPPEN TO MEET ME — Perhaps: He is not accustomed to speak with me by day.
וילך שפי AND HE WENT שפי — Understand this as the Targum does: “alone”; it is an expression denoting ease and tranquillity; the statement means that there was nothing with him except silence (nothing to disturb him).

Verse 4

ויקר AND [GOD] HAPPENED TO MEET [BALAAM] — This is an expression ordinarily used to denote events of a casual character, an expression for something shameful, an expression for an unclean happening (קרי). It is as much as to say: with reluctance and in a contemptuous manner. And on this occasion He revealed Himself to him by day, only to show how dear Israel was to Him (cf. Genesis Rabbah 52:5; Rashi on Leviticus 1:1).
את שבעת המזבחות — "Seven altars I have set in order" is not written here, but "THE SEVEN ALTARS". He said to Him: The ancestors of these people together built before Thee seven altars, but I alone have built altars equal to all of them. — Abraham built four: (Genesis 12:7) "And he built there an altar to the Lord who had appeared to him"; (Genesis 12:8) "And he removed thence unto the mount… [and he built there an altar]; (Genesis 13:18) "And Abraham moved his tent … [and built there an altar]"; and one he built on Mount Moriah (Genesis 22:9). Isaac built one: (Genesis 26:25) "And he built there an altar". Jacob built two, one at Shechem and one at Bethel (Genesis 33:20 and Genesis 35:7);
ואעל פר ואיל במזבח AND I HAVE OFFERED UPON EVERY ALTAR A BULLOCK AND A RAM — "but Abraham", said he, "offered only a single ram" (cf. Midrash Tanchuma, Balak 11, Midrash Tanchuma, Tzav 1).

Verse 5

Verse 6

Verse 7

ארה לי יעקב ולכה זעמה ישראל CURSE JACOB FOR ME AND COME EXECRATE ISRAEL — by their two names did he bid him curse them, for perhaps one of them was not distinctive enough to point them out beyond all doubt as being the people against whom the curse was directed.

Verse 8

מה אקב ולא קבה אל HOW SHALL I CURSE WHOM GOD HATH NOT CURSED — Even when they deserved to be cursed, they were not cursed. When their ancestor, Jacob, made mention of their sin — (Genesis 49:6) "For in their anger they slew a man" — he cursed their anger only, as it is said, (Genesis 49:7) "Cursed be their anger". When their ancestor, Jacob, went to his father with deceit he deserved to be cursed, but what is stated there (Genesis 27:33)? "Yea, he shall be blessed". In the case of those tribes who had to recite the blessings it is said, (Deuteronomy 27:12) "These shall stand to bless the people", but in the case of those who had to pronounce the curses it does not state, "And these shall stand to curse the people", but, "And these shall stand for the curse", — it does not wish to mention the term "cursing" in direct reference to them (the people) (Midrash Tanchuma, Vayechi 1; Midrash Tanchuma, Balak 12).
לא זעם ה' GOD IS NOT ANGRY — As for me, my power lies only in that I know to determine the exact moment when the Holy One, blessed be He, is angry, and He has not been angry all these days that I have been coming to you. And this is the meaning of what is said (Micah 6:5): "O my people, remember now what [Balak, king of Moab] devised and what Balaam [the son of Beor] answered him … that ye may know the righteous acts of the Lord" (Sanhedrin 105b).

Verse 9

כי מראש צורים אראנו FOR FROM THE TOP OF THE ROCKS I SEE HIM — I look at their origin and at the beginning of their root (descent), and I behold them strongly founded as younder rocks and mountains through their ancestors and ancestresses (Rashi translates thus: For (כי) starting from their very beginning (מראש) I behold them firm as rocks) (Midrash Tanchuma, Balak 12).
הן עם לבדד ישכן LO, THE PEOPLE SHALL DWELL ALONE — This it is what their ancestors have given them as a prerogative: to dwell in the world alone — as is the sense given to the passage by the Targum ("Lo, this people is alone destined to inherit the world").
ובגוים לא יתחשב AND SHALL NOT RECKON ITSELF AMONG THE NATIONS — Understand this as the Targum does — They will not be exterminated with the other nations, as it is said, (30:11) "For I will make a full end of all the nations [… but I will not make a full end of thee]". The words therefore mean: They do not come under the same reckoning (לא יתחשב) with other nations. — Another explanation is: When they rejoice, no other nation rejoices with them, as it is said, (Deuteronomy 32:12) "The Lord will lead him alone to future bliss", and when the nations are in prosperity they (the Israelites) eat with each one of them and yet it is not taken into account or them thereby to diminish their reward in the future life; and this is the meaning of ובגוים לא יתחשב ("and when they enjoy with the nations it is not taken into account) (Midrash Tanchuma, Balak 12).

Verse 10

מי מנה עפר יעקב וגו׳ WHO HATH COUNTED THE DUST OF JACOB [AND THE NUMBER OF THE FOURTH PART OF ISRAEL] — Understand this as the Targum does: [who has counted] the infants of the house of Jacob, who are compared to the dust of the earth (Genesis 13:16). The words מארבע משריתא in the Targum mean; [who can count … even one] of the four (רבע "a fourth") banners (companies of the tribes). — Another explanation of עפר יעקב is: Countless are the commandments which they practise in connection with dust: (Deuteronomy 22:10) "Thou shalt not plough with an ox and an ass [together]"; (Leviticus 19:19): "Thou shalt not sow thy field with two kinds of seeds". There are also the ashes of the red cow (Numbers 19:9 ff.), and the dust used in the ordeal to which a woman suspected of infidelity is subjected (Numbers 5:17), and others similar to these (Midrash Tanchuma, Balak 12).
ומספר את רבע ישראל The word רבע implies their matings — the offspring which issues from their relations (cf. Nedarim 31a; and Rashi on Numbers 24:3).
תמת נפשי מות ישרים LET ME DIE THE DEATH OF THE UPRIGHT amongst them.

Verse 11

Verse 12

Verse 13

וקבנו לי — The verb is the imperative: CURSE THEM FOR ME (cf. Rashi on v. 27).

Verse 14

שדה צפים FIELD OF ZOPHIM — There was a high spot upon which the watchman (צופה) used to stand to observe whether any hostile force was coming against the city.
ראש הפסגה THE TOP OF PISGAH — Balaam was not as expert a diviner as Balak. Balak forsaw that at some time a breach in Israel would originate from there — and as a matter of fact Moses died there, — and therefore he believed that there the curse would certainly fall upon them. "And this (the effects of the curse)" — he thought — "must be the breach which I behold" (Midrash Tanchuma, Balak 13).

Verse 15

אקרה כה — This means, I WILL BE MET YONDER by the Holy One, blessed be He, for אקרה has a passive sense.

Verse 16

וישם דבר בפיו AND HE PUT A WORD IN HIS MOUTH —And what was this "putting"? What would Scripture have lacked if it had stated "[And the Lord met Balaam and said,] Return to Balak, and thus shalt thou speak"? But the explanation is: When he heard that he was not permitted to curse, he said, "Why should I return to Balak to cause him annoyance?" Therefore the Holy One, blessed be He, put a halter and hook in his mouth as a person who pricks an animal with a hook to make it go wherever he wants. He said to him, "Despite yourself shall you return to Balak' (cf. Sanhedrin 105b; Midrash Tanchuma, Balak 13).

Verse 17

ושרי מואב עמו AND THE PRINCES OF MOAB WITH HIM — But above (v. 6) it states, "And all the princes of Moab"?! As soon as they saw that there was no hope for them in him, part of them went away, and only part of them remained (Midrash Tanchuma, Balak 13).
מה דבר ה׳ WHAT HATH THE LORD SPOKEN? — This was a derisive expression, as much as to say, "You are not your own master" (Midrash Tanchuma, Balak 13).

Verse 18

קום בלק RISE UP, BALAK — When he perceived that he was mocking at him, he set himself to annoy him, saying, "Stand on your feet; you have no right to remain seated, seeing that I am sent to you on a mission by the Omnipresent" (Midrash Tanchuma, Balak 13).
בנו צפור SON OF ZIPPOR — This (the suffix ו to mark the construct) is often found as a Biblical Hebrew form, as in (Psalms 50:10), "beast of (חיתו) the forest"; (Genesis 1:24) "beast of (חיתו) the earth"; (Psalms 114:8), "to a spring of (מעינו) water".

Verse 19

לא איש וגו׳ [GOD IS] NOT A MAN [THAT HE SHOULD LIE] — He has already sworn to them that He will bring them thither and give them as a possession the land of the seven peoples, and you think to slay them in the wilderness?! (cf. Midrash Tanchuma, Vayera 13)
ההוא אמר וגו׳ — Read this in the form of a question: HATH HE SAID, [AND SHALL HE NOT DO IT]? — The rendering of ויתנחם in the Targum, ותיבין ומחמלכין, means, "[and not as the doings of mortals who decide to do things] and again reconsider" — to withdraw from them.

Verse 20

הנה ברך לקחתי BEHOLD, I HAVE RECEIVED COMMANDMENT TO BLESS — You ask me derisively, (v. 17) "What hath the Lord spoken"? I will tell you: I have received an order from Him to bless them.
וברך ולא אשיבנה AND HE HAS BLESSED AND I CANNOT REVERSE IT — "He" has blessed them, and "I" cannot reverse this blessing.
וברך — This is equivalent to וּבְרֵךְ. This is the rule of the letter ר, as in (Psalms 74:18): "the enemy blasphemeth", חֵרֵף like חֶרֵף; and similarly (Psalms 10:3): [נאץ ה׳] ובצע בֵּרֵךְ (where בֵּרֵךְ is for בֵּרַךְ), which means, He who praises and blesses the robber (בצע) and says, 'Do not be afraid, for you will not be punished; peace will be unto you', he angers (נאץ) God thereby (but see Rashi on this verse where another translation is given). — One cannot say that ברך is a noun, for if it were, it would be voweled in both syllables with Short Patach (our Segol), and its accent would be on the first syllable (בָּרָךְ) because it is a verb in the Piel conjugation, it is voweled with Short Kametz (our Tzéré) on both syllables, and its accent is on the last syllable.

Verse 21

לא הביט און ביעקב וגו׳ HE HATH NOT BEHELD INIQUITY IN JACOB, etc. — Understand this as the Targum has it ("I have seen that there are no worshippers of idols in the house of Jacob"). Another explanation: According to its plain sense it can receive a beautiful exposition:
לא הביט HE DOTH NOT SEE — i. e., the Holy One, blessed be He, doth not see און THE INIQUITY which is IN JACOB: when they transgress His Words He does not deal so strictly with them as to pay regard to their iniquitous doings and their transgression by which they infringe His law (cf. Midrash Tanchuma, Balak 14).
עמל denotes transgression, as in (Psalms 7:15): "He conceiveth transgression (עמל)"; (Psalms 10:14) "For thou beholdest transgression (עמל) and vexation" — and it denotes this because transgression is a vexation (עמל) before the Omnipresent.
ה׳ אלקיו עמו THE LORD HIS GOD IS WITH HIM — Even when they provoke Him to anger and act rebelliously before Him He does not depart from their midst,
ותרועת מלך בו BUT THE תרועה OF A KING IS STILL WITH THEM — תרועה is an expression for love and fellowship, as (II Samuel 15:37) "the רעה of David' — the friend of David; (Judges 15:6) "And he gave her to his friend (מרעהו)." (The translation is therefore: and the fellowship of their king is still with them). In this sense, too, does Onkelos translate it: and the Shechina of their King is among them.

Verse 22

אל מוציאם ממצרים GOD BROUGHT THEM OUT FROM EGYPT — You said, (Numbers 22:5) "Behold, there is a people come out from Egypt" — it did not come out of its own account, but God brought it out (Midrash Tanchuma, Balak 14).
כתועפת ראם לו means [GOD BROUGHT THEM OUT OF EGYPT] IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE STRENGTH BEFITTING HIS SUBLIMITY (רום) and loftiness. Similar is (Job 22:25) "and silver of strength (תועפות)" — they (the word תועפות here and in the verse quoted) are both expressions signifying strength. — And I say that really it has the same meaning as the verb in (Genesis 1:20) ועוף יעופף which signifies: a bird that raises itself into the heights and lofty spheres — and this is evidence of great strength. Accordingly ותועפות ראם really signifies "a flight in the heights". — Another explanation of תועפות ראם is: "the strength of Reemim" and our Rabbis

said that this refers to "the demons'" (their strength is subject to Him) (cf. Gittin 68b).

Verse 23

כי לא נחש ביעקב FOR THERE IS NO ENCHANTMENT IN JACOB — For they are worthy of blessing since there are no enchanters or diviners amongst them.
כעת יאמר ליעקב וגו׳ IN DUE TIME IT SHALL BE SAID TO JACOB etc. — Once again will there be a time as this time (כעת) when the love which God bears them will be made manifest in the sight of all, because they sit before Him and learn the Torah at His mouth, and the place assigned to them will be inward of that of the ministering angels and these will enquire of them, מה פעל אל WHAT HATH GOD WROUGHT. This is the meaning of what is said, (Isaiah 30:20) "And thine eyes shall see thy Teacher" (Midrash Tanchuma, Balak 14). — Another explanation is that יאמר ליעקב does not express what is to happen in the future but expresses what takes place in the present: They require no enchanter nor diviner, for at every time (כעת) when it is necessary that there should be told to Jacob and to Israel what the Holy One, blessed be He, hath wrought and what are His decrees on High, they do not do enchantment nor divination, but it is told to them (יאמר ליעקב) by the mouth of their prophets what is the decree of the Omnipresent (מה פעל אל), or the Urim and Thummim declare it to them. — Onkelos, however, did not translate it thus.

Verse 24

הן עם כלביא יקום וגו׳ BEHOLD, THE PEOPLE RISES AS A LIONESS, etc. — When they rise from their sleep in the morning they show themselves strong as a lioness and as a lion to "snatch at" the Divine precepts (to perform them immediately) — to clothe themselves with the Tallith, to read the Shema and to lay Tephillin (cf. Midrash Tanchuma, Balak 14).
לא ישכב HE LIES NOT DOWN at night on his bed until he consumes (עד יאכל) and destroys every noxious thing which comes to prey upon him (טרף). How so? He reads the Shema at his bedside and commends his spirit into the hands of the Omnipresent (Midrash Tanchuma, Balak 14). If a camp or troop comes to injure them, the Holy One, blessed be He, protects them and fights their battles and causes them (the enemies) to fall slain (חללים).— Another explanation of הן עם כלביא יקום is as the Targum has it ("Behold the people shall dwell as a lioness and as a lion shall he raise himself; he will not dwell in his land until he hath slaughtered and he will inherit the wealth of the peoples").
ודם חללים ישתה AND HE SHALL DRINK THE BLOOD OF THE SLAIN — He unwittingly foretold the future — that Moses would not die until he will have made the kings of Midean fall slain (חללים) and he (Balaam) will have been slain with them, — as it is said, (Joshua 13:22) "And Balaam the son of Beor, the soothsayer, did the children of Israel slay with the sword among the rest of their slain (חלליהם)" (cf. Midrash Tanchuma, Balak 14).

Verse 25

גם קב לא תקבנו NEITHER (גם) CURSE THEM AT ALL [NOR (גם) BLESS THEM AT ALL] — The first גם adds something to the second גם and the second גם something to the first גם, similar to (1 King 3:26): "Neither mine (גם לי) nor thine (גם לך) shall it be"; and similarly (Deuteronomy 32:25): "also youths (גם בכור) also maidens (גם בתולה)" (i.e. both youths and maidens).

Verse 26

Verse 27

וקבתי לי — This is not a command as is וקבנו (v. 13), but it is a future tense: perhaps it will seem right in His eyes that thou shalt curse them for me from there; malderas in O. F.

Verse 28

ראש הפעור THE TOP OF PEOR — Balak was a great soothsayer and he foresaw that they would once be punished on account of Peor, but he knew not by what. He said: Perhaps the curse will fall upon them from there (be effective against them if pronounced there). So, too, all astrologers: they see something that will once happen but they know not exactly what they see (cf. Sotah 12b).

Chapter 24

Verse 1

ויראא בלעם כי טוב וגו׳ AND BALAAM SAW THAT IT WAS GOOD, etc. He said: I do not need to put the Holy One, blessed be He, to a further test for it is evident that He does not wish to curse them.
ולא הלך כפעם בפעם HE WENT NOT, AS AT OTHER TIMES — as he had already done twice.
לקראת נחשים TO SEEK SEEK FOR ENCHANTMENTS — to practise enchantments whereby the Lord might perhaps come to meet him according to his (Balaam's) wish. He said: Whether He wishes or does not wish to curse them, I will make mention of their sins, and the curse will fall upon them at the mention of their sins, therefore —
וישת אל המדבר פניו HE SET HIS FACE TOWARDS THE WILDERNESS — Understand this as the Targum has it (Rashi's Targum read, as in some editions: He directed his face towards the calf that the children of Israel had made in the wilderness).

Verse 2

וישא בלעם את עיניו AND BALAAM LIFTED UP HIS EYES — he wished to cast the evil eye upon them. Thus you have his three characteristics — an evil eye mentioned here, and pride and greed which have been mentioned above (see Rashi on Numbers 22:13 and 18).
שכן לשבטיו DWELLING ACCORDING TO HIS TRIBES — He saw each tribe dwelling by itself not intermingled one with another; he saw that the entrances of their tents were not exactly facing each other so that one could not peer into the other's tent (Bava Batra 60a).
ותהי עליו רוח אלהים AND THE SPIRIT OF GOD WAS UPON HIM — Then he made up his mind not to curse them (i.e. he decided to comply with the will of God, רוח אלהים).

Verse 3

בנו בער — The grammatical form בנו is exactly like that in (Psalms 114:8) "To a spring of (מעינו) water" (see Rashi on Numbers 23:18). But a Midrashic statement is: Both of them (Balak and Balaam) were superior to their fathers, for it states (Numbers 23:18): "Balak — his son was Zippor", i.e. that his father (Zippor) was his son (his inferior) in respect to royalty, and Balaam was greater than his father in prophecy

(because it states here, בלעם בנו בעור i.e. Balaam — his son was Beor): he was, so to speak, a Maneh, son of a Half-Maneh (Sanhedrin 105a, Midrash Tanchuma, Balak 13, cf. Taanit 28b).
שתום העין WITH THE PENETRATING EYE — his eye was bored out and had been extracted and its eye socket could be seen to be open. The word שתום used in the sense of "boring a hole" is a Mishnaic usage: sufficient time that we can bore a hole (ישתום) in the cask and stop it up, and it (the clay of which the stopper is made) can dry (Avodah Zarah 69a). And our Rabbis said, Because he had said, (Numbers 23:10) ומספר את רבע ישראל, meaning that the Holy One, blessed be He, occupies Himself with counting the issue of the marital life of the Israelites, awaiting the time when a righteous man will be born, he therefore said to himself, "Does He who is holy and whose ministers are holy direct his mind to matters such as these?" On this account Balaam's eye was blinded (Niddah 31a). But some explain that שתום העין means "open-eyed", just as Onkelos translated ("who can see well"). And since it says, שתום העין "with an open eye" and it does not say, "with open eyes", we may learn that in one of his eyes he was blind (Sanhedrin 105a).

Verse 4

נפל וגלוי עינים FALLING BUT HAVING HIS EYES OPEN — Its plain sense is as the Targum has it ("lying down when it was revealed to him"), meaning, that God revealed Himself to him only at night when he was lying on his bed. — And a Midrashic explanation of it is: When He revealed Himself to him he had no strength to stand on his feet, and he, therefore, fell on his face — because he was uncircumcised and it was therefore a loathsome thing that He should reveal Himself to him whilst he stood in an erect posture before Him (cf. Tar. Jon. and Rashi on Genesis 17:3).

Verse 5

מה טבו אהליך HOW GOODLY ARE THY TENTS — He said this because he saw that the entrances of their tents were not exactly facing each other (Bava Batra 60a; cf. v. 2).
משכנתיך means thy encampments, as the Targum has it. — Another explanation — מה טבו אהליך HOW GOODLY ARE THY TENTS — How goodly are the tent of Shiloh and the Temple when these flourished, in that sacrifices were offered therein to atone for you;
משכנתיך How goodly are they even when they are in ruins, because then they are a pledge (משכון) for you, and the fact that they are in ruins is an atonement for your souls, as it is said. (Lamentations 4:11) "The Lord hath brought His fury to an end". And by what means hath He brought it to an end? "He hath kindled a fire in Zion! (i.e. hath destroyed the Temple) (cf. Midrash Tanchuma, Mishpatim 11).

Verse 6

כנחלים נטיו AS THE BROOKS THAT WIND — which lengthen and draw themselves out so that they extend (נטיו) into the distance. — Our Rabbis said: From the blessings uttered by that wicked man we may learn what was in his heart as regards cursing them, when he thought to set his face towards the wilderness (cf. v. 1). When the Omnipresent turned the words of his mouth he uttered blessings corresponding to the contents of those curses which he had wished to pronounce as it is related in the chapter beginning with the word חלק Sanhedrin 105b.
כאהלים — Understand this as the Targum does ("as aromatic plants"), — taking it in the same meaning as in (Psalms 45:9) "Myrrh and aloes (אהלים).

נטע ה' (LIKE THE ALOES] WHICH THE LORD HATH PLANTED in the Garden of Eden. - Another explanation: כאהלים נטע ה׳ LIKE TENTS WHICH THE LORD HATH PLANTED — i.e., like the heavens which are stretched forth as a tent (cf. Isaiah 40:22: וימתחם כאהל לשבת).
נטע ה׳ [LIKE TENTS] WHICH THE LORD HAS PLANTED — We can speak of planting a tent for we find the expression "planting" in connection with tents, as it is said, (Daniel 11:45) "And he shall plant (ויטע) the tents of his palace".

Verse 7

מדליו means OUT OF HIS SPRINGS, and its explanation is as given in the Targum ("The king appointed from amongst his sons shall be great").
וזרעו במים רבים AND HIS SEED SHALL BE IN MANY WATERS — This is an expression denoting prosperity — he shall be as seed which is sown upon well-watered soil.
וירם מאגג מלכו AND HIS KING SHALL BE HIGHER THAN AGAG — Their first king will conquer Agag king of the Amalakites.
ותנשא מלכתו AND HIS KINGDOM SHALL BE EXALTED — i.e. the kingdom of Jacob (the Israelitish people) shall be exalted more and more, because the powerful monarchs David and Solomon will succeed him (their first king).

Verse 8

אל מוציאו ממצרים GOD WHO BROUGHT THEM OUT OF EGYPT — Who was the cause of all this greatness? God who brought them out from Egypt; by his strength and his sublimity HE EATS UP (יאכל) THE NATIONS (גוים) who are (צריו) HIS ADVERSARIES.
ועצמתיהם AND THEIR BONES — those of the adversaries.
יגרם — Menachem ben Seruk explained it in the sense of "breaking to pieces", similar to, (Zephaniah 3:3) "who have not broken to pieces (גרמו) in the morning", and similar to, (Ezekiel 23:34) "and thou shalt crunch (תגרמי) the sherds thereof". I, however, say that it has the meaning of "bone" (גרם in Aramaic corresponds to Hebrew עצם) — it means that one pulls away the flesh with his teeth from around the bone, and the marrow from inside, and brings the bone into its original bare condition (i.e., as it was before flesh grew upon it).
וחציו ימחץ AND PIERCE THEM THROUGH WITH HIS ARROWS — Onkelos translated this as meaning, the חצים of the adversaries, taking it in the sense of "their postion of land", similar to (Genesis 44:23) בעלי חצים, which he translated by מרי פלגותא "those who part (differ) from him". So, too, according to the Targum ימחץ denotes "dividing" having the same meaning as in (Judges 5:26): "She divided (מחצה) and struck through his temples". The meaning therefore is, that they will divide amongst themselves their (the adversaries') land (Hence the translation of Onkelos: "they shall take possession of their land"). — But it can also be explained as meaning חצים literally (i.e., arrows): the arrows of the Holy One, blessed be He, He will ימחץ in the blood of the adversaries — i.e., he will dip and thus dye the arrows in their blood. Similar is, (Psalms 68:24) "In order that thou mayest colour thy foot (תמחץ) by the blood". However, even in this sense it does not lose the usual meaning of "wounding", as in (Deuteronomy 32:39): "I wound (מחצתי)", for what is dyed by blood, looks as though it were wounded and stricken.

Verse 9

כרע שכב כארי HE CROUCHED, HE LAY DOWN AS A LION — Understand this as the Targum does ("He will have rest, he will dwell in strength like a lion"), meaning, they will be settled in their land in strength and might.

Verse 10

ויספק means he clapped one hand upon the other.

Verse 11

Verse 12

Verse 13

לעבר את פי ה׳ [I AM UNABLE] TO GO BEYOND THE WORD OF THE LORD — Here it does not say "[the Lord] my God", as it is said at first (Numbers 22:18), because he had now become conscious that he was regarded by the Holy One, blessed be He, as something vile and banished from His presence.

Verse 14

הולך לעמי [AND NOW, BEHOLD, I] GO TO MY PEOPLE — "From now on, behold, I am like the rest of my people". He said this because he knew that the Holy One, blessed be He, had departed from him.
אעצך לך COME AND I WILL COUNSEL THEE what you have to do. And what is the counsel? The God of these people hates unchastity, therefore tempt them to sin by means of thy women-folk, as is related in the chapter חלק (Sanhedrin 106a) — You can know that it was Balaam who gave this counsel, to make them fall by the sin of unchastity, for it is stated, of the women of Midian (Numbers 31:16), "Behold, these were an enticement to the children of Israel through the word of Balaam".
אשר יעשה העם הזה לעמך WHAT THIS PEOPLE SHALL DO TO THY PEOPLE — This is an elliptical verse, the meaning being: I will give thee counsel how to make them fall into sin, and I also will tell thee what evil they will once do to thy people Moab in later days: viz., (v. 17) "they will pierce the corners of Moab". — The Targum explains at length what is implied by the terseness of the Hebrew text ("Come I will give thee counsel what thou shouldst do and I will show thee what this people etc.")

Verse 15

Verse 16

וידע דעת עליון WHO KNOWETH THE MIND OF THE MOST HIGH — i.e., who knoweth to determine the precise moment when He is angry. (The meaning of the text is: "who knoweth His state of mind", not, "who knoweth his thoughts") (Sanhedrin 105b).

Verse 17

אראנו I SEE HIM — I see the preeminence of Jacob and his greatness, but it is not now (ולא עתה), but will be after some time.
דרך כוכב A STAR COMETH OUT [OF JACOB] — Understand this as the Targum does ("a king will arise from Jacob"). The word דרך has the same meaning as in (Lamentations 2:4): "He has bent (דרך lit., trodden) his bow; this expression is used because the star shoots across [the heavens] as an arrow does when the bow is trodden. In O. F. destent. It is as much as to say, "Prosperity (a good fortune) will rise".

וקם שבט AND A שבט RISES [OUT OF ISRAEL] — a king, who chastises with the rod (שבט) and has sovereign power.
ומחץ פאתי מואב AND PIERCETH THE CORNERS OF MOAB — This is a reference to David of whom it is stated, (II Samuel 8:2) "[And he smote Moab] … making them to lie down on the ground and he measured two lines to put to death etc.".
וקרקר AND UNDERMINETH — This is an expression denoting "digging", as in (2 Kings 19:24): "I have dug (קרתי)"; (Isaiah 51:1): "The hole of the pit from which you were dug out (נקרתם); (Proverbs 30:17) "The ravens of the valley shall dig it out (יקרהו)". In O. F. forer.
כל בני שת ALL THE CHILDREN OF SETH — i.e., all nations, because all of them issued from Seth, the son of Adam, the first man (cf. Onkelos).

Verse 18

והיה ירשה שעיר איביו SEIR ALSO SHALL BE A POSSESSION [FOR HIS ENEMIES] — for his enemy, Israel.

Verse 19

וירד מיעקב AND OUT OF JACOB ONE SHALL RULE — and there will be yet another ruler from Jacob,
והאביד שריד מעיר AND HE WILL DESTROY THE REMNANT OF THE CITY — the most important city of Edom, and that is Rome. It is of King Messiah that he is thus speaking, of whom it is said, (Psalms 72:8) "And he shall have dominion (וירד) from sea to sea"; (Obadiah v. 18) "And there shall be no remnant (שריד) of the house of Esau".

Verse 20

וירא את עמלק AND HE SAW AMALEK — i.e. He perceived the retribution destined to befall Amalek.
ראשית גוים עמלק AMALEK WAS THE BEGINNING OF NATIONS — he was the first of them all to war against Israel; thus, too, does Onkelos translate it.
ואחריתו BUT HIS LATTER END will be to be destroyed by their hands, as it is said, (Deuteronomy 25:19) "Thou shalt blot out the memory of Amalek".

Verse 21

וירא את הקיני AND HE SAW THE KENITES — Because the Kenites were settled near the Amalekites — just as it is stated, (I Samuel 15:6) "And Saul said unto the Kenites, [Go, depart, get you down from among the Amalekites]'' — he mentioned them immediately after the Amalekites. He beheld the greatness of the descendants of Jethro, of whom it is said, (I Chronicles 2:55) "The תרעתים, שמעתים, שוכתים" — [These are the Kenites] (see Sifrei Bamidbar 78:1 on Numbers 10:29; Sanhedrin 104a, 106a, Sotah 11a).
איתן מושבך FIRM IS THY DWELLING PLACE — "I wonder whence you merited this; for were you not with me in the advice we gave Pharaoh (Exodus 1:10): 'Come, let us deal wisely with them', and now you have a seat in the strength and power of Israel, (in the Sanhedrin)''! (Sanhedrin 106a).

Verse 22

כי אם יהיה לבער קין וגו׳ FOR IF THE KENITES WILL BE REMOVED etc. — Happy are you that you have firmly settled yourself in such strength, to which I have referred, so that thou will therefore never be driven from the world. For even if you will in the future go into exile with the Ten Tribes and be removed from the place where you had settled, what does it matter?

עד מה אשור תשבך HOW FAR WILL ASSYRIA CARRY YOU AWAY CAPTIVE? Possibly as far as Chaloch and Chabor — this is not being driven from the world, but only being moved from place to place, and in the end you will return with the other exiles!

Verse 23

וישא משלו וגו׳ AND HE TOOK UP HIS PARABLE etc. — Because he mentioned the captivity into Assyria he exclaimed, אוי מי יחיה משמו אל, who is able to save himself alive, so that He who decrees (God) should not place upon him (משמו) these things (אל, the equivalent of אלה) — for Sannacherib, king of Assyria, shall rise up and bring all the nations into confusion. And further, there will come —

Verse 24

צים מיד כתים SHIPS FROM THE LAND OF CHITTIM and the people of Chittim — these are the Romans — will pass over in big ships against Assyria.
וענו עבר AND WILL AFFLICT THEM ON THE OTHER SIDE (עבר) of the river Euphrates.
וגם הוא עדי אבד BUT HE ALSO SHALL PERISH EVERLASTINGLY — ("He" means the Romans). And so, too, did Daniel expressly state, (Daniel 7:11) "until the beast (Rome) was slain and its body destroyed".
וצים means [AND] BIG SHIPS, as it is written (Isaiah 33:21) "A gallant ship (ציי)", the Targum translation of which is "a big ship" (Yoma 77b).

Chapter 25

Verse 1

בשטים — Thus was its name: SHITTIM.
לזנות אל בנות מואב TO COMMIT WHOREDOM WITH THE DAUGHTERS OF MOAB — by the advice of Balaam, — as is related in the chapter חלק (Sanhedrin 106a).

Verse 2

וישתחוו לאלהיהן AND THEY PROSTRATED THEMSELVES BEFORE THEIR GODS — When anyone's passions overpowered him and he said to her, "Submit to me", she took out for him an image of Peor from her bosom, saying to him, "First prostrate yourself before this" (Midrash Tanchuma, Balak 18).

Verse 3

פעור — It was so named because they bared (פער) their anus and relieved themselves before it: this was its ceremonial rite (Sanhedrin 60b).
ויחר אף ה' בישראל AND THE ANGER OF THE LORD WAS KINDLED AGAINST ISRAEL — he sent a plague among them (cf. v. 8).

Verse 4

קח את כל ראשי העם TAKE ALL THE HEADS OF THE PEOPLE, to judge those who worshipped Peor (Sanhedrin 35a),
והוקע אותם AND HANG THEM — those who worshipped it (not the heads of the people).
והוקע — This is "hanging", just as we find in the case of Saul's sons, (II Samuel XXL 6) "And we will kill them by הוקעה unto the Lord", and there (II Samuel vv. 12—13) hanging is distinctly mentioned (Sanhedrin

34b). It is true that idolatry (the sin committed here) is punishable by stoning, but all who were stoned were also hanged (Sanhedrin 45b).
נגד השמש AGAINST THE SUN — i.e., in the sight of everyone. A Midrashic statement is: the sun made known who were the sinners, for the cloud rolled itself up from in front of him (the sinner) so that the sun shone upon him (Midrash Tanchuma, Balak 19).

Verse 5

הרגו איש אנשיו KILL EVERYONE HIS MEN — Each one of the judges of Israel killed two men (אנשיו is plural), and the judges of Israel were eighty-eight thousand in number, as it is related in Sanhedrin (cf. Sanhedrin 18a).

Verse 6

והנה איש וגו׳ AND BEHOLD, ONE [OF THE CHILDREN OF ISRAEL CAME] The tribe of Simeon gathered to Zimri who was their prince, saying to him. "We are sentenced to death and you remain quiet!?", — as it is related in the chapter beginning אלו הן הנשרפין (Sanhedrin 82a).
את המדינית THE MIDIANITISH WOMAN — Kozbi the daughter of Zur.
לעיני משה BEFORE THE EYES OF MOSES — They said to him: "Moses, is this Midianite woman forbidden or permissible as a wife. If you say she is forbidden, then who made Jethro's daughter, a Midianite woman, permissible to you, etc." as is related there (Sanhedrin 82a).
והמה בכים AND THEY WERE WEEPING — the law (decision on this matter) escaped him and therefore they all burst out into weeping (Sanhedrin 82a). — In the case of the golden calf Moses successfully resisted six hundred thousand men, as it is said, (Exodus 32:20) "And he ground it to powder [and he made the children of Israel drink of it]", and here his hands were weak (he did not know what to do)?! But this was intentionally caused by God in order that Phineas might come and receive that which was meant for him (Midrash Tanchuma, Balak 20).

Verse 7

וירא פנחס AND PHINEAS SAW — He saw what was being done and he was thereby reminded of the law on this subject (Sanhedrin 82a). He said to Moses, "I have received a tradition from you: he who has intercourse with an Aramean (heathen) woman, zealous people may attack him". He replied to him: "Let him who reads the letter be the agent for executing it"; — straightway, ויקח רמח בידו HE TOOK A JAVELIN IN HIS HAND, etc. (Sanhedrin 82a).

Verse 8

אל הקבה means TO THE TENT.
אל קבתה means IN HER STOMACH, similar to (Deut 18:3): "And the two cheeks and the maw (והקיבה)". He miraculously struck exactly at Zimri's male and her female parts so that everyone could plainly perceive that he had not killed them without just cause. Many other miracles, too, were wrought for him, as is related there (Sanhedrin 82b).

Verse 9

Verse 10

Verse 11

פינחס בן אלעזר בן אהרן הכהן PHINEAS THE SON OF ELEAZAR THE SON OF AARON THE PRIEST — Because the tribes spoke disparagingly of him, saying, "Have you seen this grandson of Puti the father of whose mother used to fatten (פטם) calves for idolatrous sacrifices (see Exodus 6:25 that Eleazar his father had married a daughter of Putiel who is identified with Jethro; see Rashi on that verse and Exodus 18:1), and he has dared to slay a prince of one of Israel's tribes!", therefore Scripture comes and connects his genealogy with Aaron (Sanhedrin 82b).
בקנאו את קנאתי means "when he executed my vengeance" (more lit., when he avenged my avenging) — when he displayed the anger that I should have displayed. The expression קנאה always denotes glowing with anger to execute vengeance for a thing; in O. F. emportment (cf. Rashi on 11:29).

Verse 12

את בריתי שלום [I GIVE TO HIM] MY COVENANT — PEACE — This means: I give him my covenant that it should be to him as a covenant of peace; just like a man who shows gratitude and friendliness to one who has done him a kindness. So here, too, the Holy One, blessed be He, expressed to him His peaceful feelings towards him.

Verse 13

והיתה לו AND IT SHALL BE UNTO HIM — this covenant of Mine shall be unto him —
ברית כהנת עולם A COVENANT OF AN EVERLASTING PRIESTHOOD — for although the priesthood had already been given to Aaron's descendants (cf. Exodus 28:40-41), it was given only to Aaron and his sons who had been anointed together with him and to their offspring whom they might beget after they had been anointed. But Phineas who had been born prior to that and had not been anointed, had not as yet attained the status of priesthood until now. So, too, do we read in Zevachim 101b: Phineas did not become a priest until he had slain Zimri.
לאלהיו means [HE WAS ZEALOUS] FOR THE SAKE OF HIS GOD, just as, (Numbers 11:29) "Are you zealous for My sake (לי)?" and (Zechariah 8:2) "I am zealous לציון", i.e., for Zion's sake.

Verse 14

ושם איש ישראל וגו׳ AND THE NAME OF THE ISRAELITE [WHO WAS SMITTEN] — Wherever it gives the genealogy of a good man in praise of him, it gives the genealogy of a bad man mentioned in the same story to disparage him (Midrash Tanchuma, Pinchas 2).
נשיא בית אב לשמעני A PRINCE OF A FATHER'S HOUSE AMONGST THE SIMEONITES — of one of the five 'father's houses' which were of the tribe of Simeon. — Another explanation: This is stated to tell the praiseworthiness of Phineas: that although this man was a prince he did not refrain from showing his zeal against the profanation of the Divine Name — on this account Scripture tells you who it was (a prince!) that was smitten by him.

Verse 15

ושם האשה המכה וגו׳ AND THE NAME OF THE [MIDIANITISH] WOMAN WHO WAS SMITTEN etc. — This is stated to show you the hatred the Midianites bore to Israel — that they abandoned even a princess to prostitution in order to make Israel sin (Midrash Tanchuma, Pinchas 2).

ראש אמות [HE WAS] THE HEAD OF THE PEOPLE — He was one of the five kings of Midian, Evi and Rekem and Zur etc. (31:8). He, however, was the most important of all of them, as it is said, "the head of the people", but because he made himself despicable by abandoning his daughter to prostitution it enumerates him not first but only third (Midrash Tanchuma, Pinchas 2).
בית אב — Midian had five fathers' houses: Ephah and Epher, and Hanoch, and Abida and Eldoah (Genesis 25:4) — and this man was king of one of them.

Verse 16

Verse 17

צרור — This grammatical form is similar to זכור and שמור: it expresses the idea of continuous present action — You must [constantly] show enmity toward them.

Verse 18

כי צררים הם לכם וגו׳ על דבר פעור FOR THEY SHOWED THEMSELVES YOUR ENEMIES etc. IN THE MATTER OF PEOR — i.e., in that they abandoned their daughters to prostitution in order to lead you astray after Peor; but He did not command them to destroy the Moabites — on account of Ruth who would later on issue from them, just as we state in Bava Kamma 38b.

Verse 19

Chapter 26

Verse 1

ויהי אחרי המגפה AND IT CAME TO PASS AFTER THE PESTILENCE [THAT THE LORD SPOKE TO MOSES … TAKE THE SUM OF ALL THE CONGREGATION] — A parable! This may be compared to the case of a shepherd amongst whose flock wolves found their way and slew some of them, and he counted them to discover the number of those that were left. — Another explanation: When they left Egypt and were entrusted to Moses' care, they were entrusted to him by number, now when he is close to death and has to hand back his sheep, he hands them back by number (Midrash Tanchuma, Pinchas 4).

Verse 2

לבית אבתם [TAKE THE SUM OF THE CONGREGATION] ACCORDING TO THEIR FATHERS' HOUSE — after their fathers' tribes shall they reckon their descent, and not after their mothers' (Bava Batra 109b).

Verse 3

וידבר משה ואלעזר הכהן אתם AND MOSES AND ELEAZAR THE PRIEST SPOKE WITH THEM — They spoke with them (אתם; cf. 5:5) regarding this: that the Omnipresent had (given command to count them.
לאמר SAYING they said to them (what they said to them was): You must be counted FROM TWENTY YEARS OLD AND UPWARDS.

Verse 4

מבן עשרים שנה ומעלה כאשר צוה וגו׳ FROM TWENTY YEARS OLD AND ONWARDS, EVEN AS [THE LORD] HAS COMMANDED [MOSES AND THE CHILDREN OF ISRAEL, WHO CAME FORTH FROM EGYPT] that the counting of them (of those who came out from Egypt) should be from twenty years old and upwards, as it is said. (Exodus 30:14): "Every one that passeth amongst them that are numbered [shall be from twenty years old and upwards]".

Verse 5

משפחת החנכי THE FAMILY OF THE HANOCHITES — Because the heathen nations spoke slightingly of Israel, saying, "How can these trace their descent by their tribes? Do they think that the Egyptians did not overmaster their mothers? If they showed themselves master of their bodies, it is quite certain that they did so over those of their wives!". On this account the Holy One, blessed be He, set His name upon them: the letter ה on one side of their name and the letter י on the other side (חנכיה), to intimate: I bear testimony for them that they are the sons of their reputed fathers (and not of the Egyptians) (Shir HaShirim Rabbah 4:12). This it is that is expressed by David, (Psalms 122:4) שבטי יה עדות לישראל: "that the tribes bear the name of the Lord (יה) is a testimony regarding Israel" — this Divine Name (יה) bears testimony regarding their tribes (i.e. that they rightly attach themselves to those tribes to which they claim to belong). On this account in the case of all of them it is written החנכי and הפלואי but in the case of ימנה (v. 44) it was not felt necessary to state "of the family of הימני", because the Divine Name is already attached to it — the י at the beginning and the ה at the end (ימנה) (Yalkut Shimoni on Torah 773).

Verse 6

Verse 7

Verse 8

Verse 9

אשר הצו WHO INCITED — i.e., who incited Israel, על משה AGAINST MOSES, בהצתם WHEN THEY INCITED the people AGAINST THE LORD.
הצו means they persuaded Israel to strive against Moses — it is a grammatical form denoting "they caused someone to do something".

Verse 10

ויהיו לנס AND THEY BECAME A נס — a sign and a reminder in order that no stranger should bring himself near to raise further dispute concerning the priesthood (cf. Numbers 17:5).

Verse 11

ובני קרח לא מתו BUT THE SONS OF KORAH DID NOT DIE — They were in the plot originally, but at the moment when the rebellion broke out they had

thoughts of repentance in their hearts; therefore a high spot was fenced round for them in Gehinnom and they stayed there (Sanhedrin 110a).

Verse 12

Verse 13

לזרח OF ZERAH — He is identical with Zohar (mentioned in Exodus 6:15 as a son of Simeon), which is an expression equivalent to צהר, shining (a synonym of זרח). However, the family of אהוד (mentioned there) had ceased to exist by now. The same was the case with five families of the tribe of Benjamin, for with ten sons did Benjamin go down to Egypt and here it enumerates only five. Similarly with Ezbon of the tribe of Gad. So you have seven families that had become extinct (cf. Midrash Tanchuma, Pinchas 5). — And I have found in the Talmud Yerushalmi Yoma 1:2 the reason why these seven families were now extinct: that when Aaron died the clouds of glory departed and the Canaanites came to wage war against Israel. These therefore set their hearts on returning to Egypt and turned back eight stages from Mount Hor to Moserah, as it is said, (Deuteronomy 10:6) "And the children of Israel journeyed from Bene Jaakon to Moserah; there Aaron died". But did he not die at Mount Hor and from Moserah to Mount Hor there were eight stages in a backward direction? But the explanation is that they turned back, and the Levites pursued them to force them to return and slew of them seven families. And besides these, of the sons of Levi there fell four families: the families of Shimei and Uzzieli, and of the three sons of Izhar (Exodus 6:21) only the family of one son, Korah, is enumerated here, v. 58, so that the family of Izhar may be regarded as extinct — making three families missing. And as regards the fourth family I do not know which of those mentioned in 3:21, 27, 33, it was that had become extinct by now (Talmud Yerushalmi Sotah 1:10; Yoma 1:1). But Rabbi Tanchuma (Midrash Tanchuma, Pinchas 5) explained that they (the families not mentioned here) died by the plague in the matter of Balaam. But this can hardly be so, because according to the deficiency that shows itself in the tribe of Simeon in this census, as compared with the first census in the wilderness of Sinai (1:23), it would appear that all the twenty four thousand who died of that plague (Numbers 25:9) must have fallen from the tribe of Simeon.

Verse 14

Verse 15

Verse 16

לאזני OF OZNI — I say (cf. Rashi on v. 13) that this is the family of Ezbon, (Genesis 46:16), but I do not know why his family was not called directly by his name.

Verse 17

Verse 18

Verse 19

Verse 20

Verse 21

Verse 22

Verse 23

Verse 24

יִשׁוּב OF JASHUB — He must be identical with Job (Genesis 46:13) who is mentioned amongst those who went down to Egypt, for all the families were called by the names of those who went down to Egypt. But as for those who were born from that time and onwards their families were not called by their own names, except the families of Ephraim and Manasseh, both of whom wore born in Egypt, and Ard and Naaman, the sons of Bela the son of Benjamin (v. 40). And I have found in the work of R. Moses the Preacher why this was so in the case of the two latter — that their mother went down to Egypt when she was already pregnant with them so that they may be regarded as being among those who went down to Egypt, and on this account they formed separate families, just as Chamul and Chezron who were grandchildren of Judah (v. 21), and Cheber and Malkiel who were Asher's grandchildren (v. 45). If this is an Agada, well and good; but if not, then I say that Bela had many grandchildren and that from these two, Ard and Naaman, there issued from each a large family, and the offspring of the other sons were called after Bela's name, but the offspring of these two were called after their name. So, too, I say about the sons of Machir who formed two different families, one called after his name, and one called after the name of Gilead, his son, because it was a very large family. Five families are missing from Benjamin's sons as stated before: here (i.e., by the fact that five of the families had become extinct) there was fulfilled part of his mother's prophecy which is alluded to in the fact that she called him Ben Oni (my unfortunate son), (Genesis 35:18), whilst by the incident of the concubine in Gibea (Judges 20:35), the whole of it was fulfilled for practically the entire tribe was exterminated. This I found in the work of R. Moses the Preacher.

Verse 25

Verse 26

Verse 27

Verse 28

Verse 29

Verse 30

Verse 31

Verse 32

Verse 33

Verse 34

Verse 35

Verse 36

ואלה בני שותלח וגו׳ AND THESE ARE THE SONS OF SHUTHELAH etc. — As for the other sons of Shuthelah their offspring were called after Shuthelah's name; but out of Eron there issued a large family which was therefore called after his own name so that the children of Shuthelah were reckoned as two different families (the family of Shuthelah and the family of Eron). — Go and reckon and you will find in this section fifty seven families, and of the sons of Levi eight, so that there are sixty five in all. This is the meaning of what is said, (Deuteronomy 7:7): "For you are the least (המעט) [of all the peoples etc.]." The word המעט may be taken to signify: you are five (ה) less (מעט) than the families of all the nations, who are seventy in number. This, also, I understand from the work of R. Moses the Preacher, only that I have been compelled to omit from or add to his words.

Verse 37

Verse 38

לאחירם OF AHIRAM — He is identical with Ehi (אחי) who went down to Egypt (Genesis 46:21), and because he was called after Joseph's name (Sotah

36b), who was his (Benjamin's) brother (אח) and greater, (רם) than he, he was also called Achiram.

Verse 39

לשפופם OF SHEFUFAM - he was identical with Muppim, but was so called also after Joseph because Joseph became enfeebled (שפוף) through his sufferings among the nations.

Verse 40

Verse 41

Verse 42

לשוחם OF SHUHAM — he is identical with Hushim (Genesis 46:23).

Verse 43

Verse 44

Verse 45

Verse 46

ושם בת אשר שרח AND THE NAME OF THE DAUGHTER OF ASHER WAS SERAH — Because she still remained alive after all these long years (Sotah 13a) it exceptionally mentions her here (Seder Olam 9).

Verse 47

Verse 48

Verse 49

Verse 50

Verse 51

Verse 52

Verse 53

לאלה תחלק הארץ TO THESE THE LAND SHALL BE DIVIDED, and not to any who are now less than twenty years old; even though they become included among those who are twenty before the division of the land, — for they were seven years in conquering it and seven years did they take in dividing it — for no one received a portion in the land except these 601,000 and if one of these had six sons, they received only their father's portion (cf. Bava Batra 117a).

Verse 54

לרב תרבה נחלתו TO THE NUMEROUS THOU SHALT GIVE MORE INHERITANCE — To the tribe that had a numerous population they gave a large portion of land. Although the portions were not of equal area because, as we have now said, in all cases they assigned the portions according to the size of the tribe, yet they did so only by aid of the lot, but the lot fell by the utterance of the Holy Spirit, as is explained in Baba Batra 122a: Eleazar the Priest was clothed with the Urim and Thummim, and spake by the Holy Spirit, "If such-and-such a tribe comes up, such-and-such a territory shall come up with him". The names of the tribes were written on twelve tablets, and those of twelve districts on twelve tablets. They mixed them in an urn, and the prince of a tribe inserted his hand in it and took out two tablets. There came up in his hand the tablet bearing the name of his tribe and the tablet relating to the district that had been declared by the Urim and Tummim to be intended for it. The lot, itself cried out, saying, "I, the lot, have come up for such-and-such a district for such-and-such a tribe", as it is said, (v. 56) על פי הגורל by the mouth (utterance) of the lot [shall the possession thereof be divided]" (Midrash Tanchuma, Pinchas 6). The land was not divided by measurement alone because one district is superior to another but it was divided by estimating its fertility: a bad piece of land sufficient to sow a Kor was regarded as the equivalent of a good piece of land sufficient to sow a Seah (the thirtieth part of a Kor) — all depended upon the value of the soil.

Verse 55

לשמות מטה אבתם ACCORDING TO THE NAMES OF THE TRIBES OF THEIR FATHERS [THEY SHALL INHERIT] — These (the fathers referred to) were they who came out of Egypt. — Scripture treated this inheritance differently to all other inheritances mentioned in the Torah, for in the case of all other inheritances the living become heirs to the dead, whilst here the dead become heirs to the living. How is this so? Two brothers who were of those who came out of Egypt who had sons at least twenty years old amongst those who came into the Land, one son to this and three to that, the one son took one portion, and the three took three portions, for it is said, (v. 53) "To these (enumerated in the census taken immediately before they entered Palestine) shall the land be divided". Their inheritance (that of these four) returns to (is regarded as having belonged to) their fathers' father, and they (the two brothers who have four sons between them), divide equally. This is what is stated, "according to the names of the tribes of their fathers they shall inherit" — that after the sons have received they divide it according to the fathers who came out of Egypt. If, however, they had straightway divided it according to the number of those who came out of Egypt these

four would have taken only two portions, whilst now they take four portions (Bava Batra 117a; Sifrei Bamidbar 132:1).
אך בגורל — Joshua and Caleb are excepted from this method of division (since אך is a limiting term) and so indeed it states, (Judges 1:20) "And they gave Hebron to Caleb as Moses had said" (cf. Rashi on Numbers XlV. 24), and it further states, (Joshua 19:50) "According to the command of the Lord they gave him (Joshua) the city which he had asked" (Sifrei Bamidbar 132:3).
מטות אבתם THE TRIBES OF THEIR FATHERS — Consequently proselytes and slaves were excepted (Sifrei Bamidbar 132:4).

Verse 56

על פי הגורל ACCORDING TO (more lit., by the mouth of) THE LOT [SHALL THE POSSESSION BE DIVIDED] — The lot itself spoke as I have already explained; this tells us that the division took place by the Holy Spirit (Midrash Tanchuma, Pinchas 6).

Verse 57

Verse 58

אלה משפחת לוי THESE ARE THE FAMILIES OF LEVI — there are missing here the families of Shimei and Uzziel and part of that of Jizhar (cf. Exodus 6:16 ff. and Rashi on v. 13).

Verse 59

אשר ילדה אתה ללוי במצרים WHOM HER MOTHER BORE TO LEVI IN EGYPT — she was born in Egypt but was not conceived in Egypt; when they came "between the walls" (within the confines of Egypt), she gave birth to her, and she (Jochebed) made up the number of seventy; because in the enumeration of them (Genesis 46:8—27) you will find only sixty-nine (Numbers Rabbah 13:20; cf. Rashi Genesis 46:15).

Verse 60

Verse 61

Verse 62

כי לא התפקדו בתוך בני ישראל FOR THEY WERE NOT NUMBERED AMONGST THE CHILDREN OF ISRAEL, that they should also be numbered from twenty years old and upwards. What was the reason that they were not numbered from twenty years old? כי לא נתן להם נחלה BECAUSE NO INHERITANCE WAS TO BE GIVEN THEM, while those who were counted from twenty years old were persons who were recipients of an inheritance, as it is said, (v. 54) "to everyone shall his inheritance be given according to those that were numbered of them", (consequently the Levites had to form a different group for the census).

Verse 63

Verse 64

ובאלה לא היה איש וגו׳ BUT AMONG THESE THERE WAS NO MAN [OF THEM WHOM MOSES AND AARON NUMBERED] — no man; but the decree consequent upon the incident of the spies had not been enacted upon the women, because they held the Promised Land dear. The men had said, (Numbers 14:4) "Let us appoint a chief and return to Egypt", while the women said, (Numbers 27:4) "Give us a possession in the Land". On this account, too, the chapter regarding the daughters of Zelophehad follows immediately here (Sifrei Bamidbar 133:1).

Chapter 27

Verse 1

למשפחת מנשה בן יוסף OF THE FAMILIES OF MANASSEH THE SON OF JOSEPH — Why is this stated? Has it not already been said בן מנשה, and consequently we know that they belonged to the family of Manasseh the son of Joseph?! But it is to suggest the following idea to you: Just as Joseph held the Promised Land dear, as it is said, (Genesis 50:25) "And ye shall bring my bones up (to Palestine) from hence", so, too, his daughters held the Land dear, as it is said, (v. 4) "Give us an inheritance"; and further to teach you that they were righteous all of them (everyone here mentioned in the pedigree), for in every case where a person's doings and his ancestors' doings are nowhere plainly described and Scripture somewhere enters into the details of the pedigree in respect to one of them, tracing his genealogy back to someone worthy of praise, it is evident that the person in question is himself a righteous man and a son of a righteous father. But if it gives his genealogy in connection with something deserving of reprobation, — as, for example, (2 Kings 25:25) "Ishmael the son of Nethanian the son of Elishama came … and smote Gedaliah", then it is quite certain that all who are mentioned in connection with him were wicked people (Sifrei Bamidbar 133:1).
מחלה נעה וגו׳ MAHLAH, NOAH, etc. — But further on (Numbers 36:11) states, "And Mahlah, Tirzah were" (changing the position of the names within the verse): this is to tell you that they all were of equal worth one with another, and on this account it is that it changed their order (i.e. the order of their names) (Sifrei Bamidbar 133:2).

Verse 2

לפני משה ולפני אלעזר [AND THEY STOOD] BEFORE MOSES AND BEFORE ELEAZAR [THE PRIEST] — The fact that they approached Eleazar the Priest and not Aaron tells us that they stood before them (i.e., that this incident occurred) only (not earlier than) in the fortieth year after the Exodus indeed after Aaron's death (Sifrei Bamidbar 133:3).
לפני משה [THEY STOOD] BEFORE MOSES, and afterwards לפני אלעזר, BEFORE ELEAZAR?! But is it possible if Moses did not know what reply to give them that Eleazar should know it? Rather, invert the words of the text and so expound it (before Eleazar and before Moses). This is the view of R. Josiah; but Abba Chanan said in the name of R. Eleazar that this inversion is unnecessary: they were sitting in the House of Study and they (the daughters of Zelophehad) stood before all of those who were present (Sifrei Bamidbar 133:3; Bava Batra 119b and Rashi on Numbers 9:6).

Verse 3

והוא לא היה וגו׳ AND HE WAS NOT [… IN THE CONGREGATION OF KORAH] — Because they intended to state בחטאו מת, that HE DIED IN HIS OWN SIN they felt compelled to say he had taken no part in the sin of those who murmured, nor had he been in the congregation of Korah who incited the people against the Holy One, blessed be He (cf. Sifrei Bamidbar 133:3, Bava Batra 118b), but he had died through his own sin only, and had not made others to sin with him (Sifrei Bamidbar 133:3). — As regards what this sin was, R. Akiba said that he was the man who gathered sticks on the Sabbath day (Numbers 15:32); R. Simeon said that he was one of those who presumed to disobey God's command (Numbers 14:44) (Shabbat 96b).

Verse 4

למה יגרע שם אבינו WHY SHOULD THE NAME OF OUR FATHER BE DONE AWAY — We stand in the place of male children, and if you say that females are not regarded as issue in respect to inheritance, then our mother should marry her deceased husband's brother (cf. Deuteronomy 25:5, 6) (Bava Batra 119b).
כי אין לו בן [WHY SHOULD OUR FATHER'S NAME BE DONE AWAY WITH] BECAUSE HE HATH NO SON — Thus it follows that if he had had a son they would have made no claim of any kind: this tells us that they were women of intelligence (Sifrei Bamidbar 133:4; cf. Bava Batra 119b).

Verse 5

ויקרב משה את משפטן AND MOSES BROUGHT THEIR CAUSE [BEFORE THE LORD] — The law on this subject escaped him (Sanhedrin 8a). Here he received punishment because he had assumed a "crown" (he had set himself up as the supreme judge) by saying, (Deuteronomy 1:17) "And the cause that is too hard for you ye shall bring to me". Another explanation: This chapter ought to have been written by Moses (i.e., like most laws in the Torah it should have been spoken to the people by Moses without his having waited until some incident made its promulgation necessary), but for the fact that the daughters of Zelophehad had so much merit, it was therefore written through them (it was their complaint which gave occasion for stating it) (Bava Batra 119a; Sanhedrin 8a).

Verse 6

Verse 7

כן בנות צלפחד דברת THE DAUGHTERS OF ZELOPHEHAD SPEAK RIGHT — Understand the word כן as the Targum does: יאות rightly, properly. God said: Exactly so is this chapter written before me on High (The Law has long since been fixed) (Sifrei Bamidbar 134:1). This tells us that their eye saw what Moses' eye did not see. (They had a finer perception of what was just in the law of inheritance than Moses had.) (cf. Midrash Tanchuma, Pinchas 8).
כן בנות צלפחד דברת — "They have made a fair claim". Happy is the person with whose words the Holy One, blessed be He, agrees (Sifrei Bamidbar 134:1).
נתן תתן lit., GIVING THOU SHALT GIVE [A POSSESSION OF AN INHERITANCE AMONGST THEIR FATHER'S BRETHREN] — This suggests: thou shalt give two portions, viz., the portion of their father (אחזת נחלה) who was one of those who came out of Egypt, and his portion that he should have had together with his brothers (נחלה בתוך אחי אביהם) in the property of his

father Hefer (who also was one of those who left Egypt) (cf. Rashi on Numbers 26:55) (cf. Sifrei Bamidbar 134:1; Bava Batra 118b).
והעברת — This is an expression (also) denoting "wrath" and it is used here instead of a form of נתן found throughout the chapter to suggest that God's wrath is directed against one who leaves no son to be his heir (Bava Batra 116a). Another explanation is that the form of העבר "causing to pass" is exceptionally used in the case of a daughter being her father's heiress because a daughter as heiress ordinarily causes the inheritance to pass from one tribe to another tribe, since her son and her husband are her heirs (Sifrei Bamidbar 134:2; Bava Batra 147a), for it must be born in mind that the command (Numbers 36:7), "The inheritance shall not move from tribe to tribe" was laid only upon that generation (Bava Batra 120a). And so, for the same reason, we have this verb used in (v. 8): "Then ye shall cause his inheritance to pass to his daughter", for you see that in all of them (the other cases mentioned here) it says, ונתתם, "and ye shall give" (vv. 9, 10, 11), but in the case of a daughter it says, והעברתם, "and ye shall cause it to pass".

Verse 8

Verse 9

Verse 10

Verse 11

לשארו הקרוב אליו ממשפחתו TO HIS KIN THAT IS NEXT TO HIM OF HIS FAMILY — The term משפחה used in connection with inheritance denotes kinship only on the father's side (Sifrei Bamidbar 134:3; Bava Batra 119b).

Verse 12

עלה אל הר העברים GO UP INTO [THIS] MOUNT ABARIM — Why does this follow immediately here? Because when the Holy One, blessed be He, said to Moses, (v. 7) "Thou shalt surely give them an inheritance in the land" he (Moses) said, "It is me that the Omnipresent has commanded to apportion the inheritance. Perhaps then the decree that I must die in the wilderness is annulled and I shall enter the Promised Land!" Whereupon God said to him, "My decree remains exactly as it was" (Midrash Tanchuma, Pinchas 9). — Another explanation: As soon as Moses entered into the territory of the sons of Gad and the sons of Reuben (the eastern side of the Jordan, which, having been assigned to these tribes, might be regarded as part of the Promised Land), he rejoiced, saying, "It seems to me that the vow regarding me has been annulled in my favour". God, therefore, said to him, My decree remains exactly as it was. A parable! It may be compared to the case of a king who decreed against his son that he should not enter the door of his palace. He (the king) entered within the gate, and he (the son) went after him (without the father raising any objection); to the audience chamber, and he after him. But as soon as he was about to enter his sleeping-chamber (his private room) he said to him, "My son, from here and further on you may not go" (Sifrei Bamidbar 134:4).

Verse 13

כאשר נאסף אהרן אחיך [THOU SHALT BE GATHERED TO THY PEOPLE] AS AARON THY BROTHER WAS GATHERED — From this it is evident that Moses longed for a death similar to that of Aaron (cf. Rashi on Numbers 20:26). — Another explanation: you will die as he died (in the wilderness) because you are no better than he (Midrash Tanchuma, Pinchas 9). — Such indeed is suggested by (Deuteronomy 32:50. 51): "[and die … as Aaron thy brother died …] because you sanctified me not". Thus it follows, if ye (both of you) had sanctified me your time would not have yet come to depart this life and you would not have died in the wilderness (Sifrei Bamidbar 137:1). In every passage where it writes about their death you will find that it writes about their offence. Because a decree had been made against the generation of the wilderness (those who left Egypt) that they should die in the wilderness on account of the sin that they did not have faith in God, therefore Moses requested that the nature of his offence should be stated in the Torah, so that people might not say, "He, too, was one of those "rebels". A parable: It may be compared to the case of two women who were punished by the Court; one was an immoral woman and one had merely eaten unripe figs of the sabbatical year's growth. The latter, therefore, requested that the nature of her offence might be made public, and they did so by proclamation. So, too, here: wherever it mentions their death it mentions also their misdeed, in order to make it known that there was only this single sin in them (Tanchuma 4:6:10 on חקת; Yoma 86b; cf. Sifrei Bamidbar 137:2).

Verse 14

המה מי מריבת קדש THEY, THE WATERS OF MERIBA IN KADESH — they alone were the cause of their death: there was no other sin in them. — Another explanation is: it was they (the waters) which were the cause of their rebellion at Marah (Exodus 16:23-24), it was they which made them rebel at the Red Sea (Exodus 14:11—12) and yet it was they which made them rebel here in the wilderness of Zin.

Verse 15

וגו׳ וידבר משה אל ה' AND AND MOSES SPAKE TO THE LORD, [LET THE LORD … SET A MAN OVER THE CONGREGATION] — This statement serves to show the praise of the righteous: when they are about to depart from the world, they abandon all thought of their own affairs and occupy themselves with the affairs of the community (Sifrei Bamidbar 138).
לאמר saying (more lit., to say, i.e., that God should say, or answer him) — He said to Him, "Answer me whether You will appoint a leader for them or not" (Sifrei Bamidbar 138).

Verse 16

יפקד ה׳ LET THE LORD … SET [A MAN OVER THE CONGREGATION] — When Moses heard that the Omnipresent said to him, "Give the inheritance of Zelophehad to his daughters", he said to himself, "The time has come that I should ask something that I want — that my sons should inherit my high position". God replied to him, "Not thus has entered My mind; Joshua deserves to receive the reward of his ministrations, because "he has never departed from out the tent" (Exodus XXXIII 11). — This is what Solomon said, (Proverbs 27:18) ''Whoso keepeth the fig-tree shall eat the fruit thereof, [and he that waiteth on his master shall be honoured]" (Midrash Tanchuma, Pinchas 11).
אלהי הרוחת GOD OF THE SPIRITS [OF ALL FLESH] — Why is this expression used? (i.e., why does it not state simply אלהי כל בשר?) He said to Him: "Lord of the Universe! the personality of each person is revealed to you,

and no two are alike. Appoint over them a leader who will tolerate each person according to his individual character (Midrash Tanchuma, Pinchas 10; cf. Yalkut Shimoni on Torah 776).

Verse 17

אשר יצא לפניהם ONE WHO MAY GO BEFORE THEM — not as is the way of the kings of the nations who sit at home and send their armies to battle, but as "I" have done — I who fought against Sihon and against Og, as it is said, (Numbers 21:34) "Do not fear him: "[for I have delivered him into thy hand … and thou shall do to him as thou didst unto Sihon, etc.]" and as is the way that Joshua followed, as it is said, (Joshua 5:3) "And Joshua went to him and said, Art thou for us [or for our adversaries]". And so, too, in the case of David, it says, (I Samuel 18:16) "For he went out and came in before them" — went out at their head, and came in at their head (Sifrei Bamidbar 139:2).
ואשר יוציאם AND WHO WILL LEAD THEM OUT, safely through his merits,
ואשר יביאם AND WHO WILL BRING THEM IN, safely through his merits (Siphre). Another explanation: ואשר יביאם AND WHO WILL BRING THEM IN — I ask that You should not do to him, as You have done to me' for I may not bring them into the Land. (cf. Yalkut Shimoni on Torah 776).

Verse 18

קח לך TAKE TO THEE [JOSHUA] — take him through fine words, saying,"Fortunate are you that you have merited to lead the children of the Omnipresent!" (cf. Sifrei Bamidbar 92 on 11:16).
לך [TAKE] TO THEE — take one who has been examined by you, the one with whom you are familiar.
אשר רוח בו [A MAN] IN WHOM THERE IS SPIRIT — As you requested; someone able to deal with the character of each one. (Sifrei Bamidbar 140:1).
וסמכת את ידך עליו AND LAY THY HAND UPON HIM — Give him an interpreter, so that he will hold Halachic discourses during your life-time, — in order that people may not say about him if he does this only after your death: he dared not raise his head during Moses days but did so only at his death (cf. Sifrei Bamidbar 140:1).

Verse 19

וצויתה אתו AND GIVE HIM A CHARGE concerning Israel; say to him, "Know that they are troublesome, that they are refractory — accept your office having in mind that you will have to take upon yourself all this (cf. Sifrei Bamidbar 92 on 11:16).

Verse 20

ונתתה מהודך עליו AND THOU SHALT PUT SOME OF THY GLORY UPON HIM — This refers to the shining of the skin of his countenance (see Exodus 34:29—30).
מהודך SOME OF THY GLORY, and not all thy glory; consequently we learn from this: Moses' face beamed like the sun, Joshua's face only like the moon (Sifrei Bamidbar 140:2; Bava Batra 75a).
למען ישמעו כל עדת ישראל THAT ALL THE CONGREGATION OF THE CHILDREN OF ISRAEL SHOULD BE OBEDIENT TO HIM — that they should comport themselves towards him with respect and reverence, in the same way as they comport themselves towards you (cf. Yalkut Shimoni on Torah 776).

Verse 21

ולפני אלעזר הכהן יעמד AND HE SHALL STAND BEFORE ELEAZAR THE PRIEST — Here you have the request that you have made: that this honour should not depart from your father's house, for Joshua, too, will need Eleazar (Midrash Tanchuma, Pinchas 11).
ושאל לו AND HE SHALL ASK OF HIM, whenever he finds it necessary to go forth to war (cf. Targum Jonathan on).
על פיו AT HIS WORD [SHALL THEY GO FORTH] — at Eleazar's.
וכל העדה AND ALL THE CONGREGATION — the Sanhedrin (Sanhedrin 16a).

Verse 22

ויקח את יהושע AND HE TOOK JOSHUA — he took him by fine words and told him the reward that will be given to Israel's leaders in the world to come (Sifrei Bamidbar 141:2).

Verse 23

וימסך את ידיו AND HE LAID HIS HANDS [UPON HIM] — generously (in full measure), even more than he had been commanded, for the Holy One, blessed be He, had said, (v. 18) "Lay thy hand [upon him]", but he did this with his two hands (Yalkut Shimoni on Torah 960), and so made of him a full and heaped up vessel (Sifrei Bamidbar 141:3) and filled him generously with his own wisdom.
כאשר דבר ה׳ AS THE LORD SPAKE, in respect also of the glory: he put some of his glory upon him.

Chapter 28

Verse 1

Verse 2

צו את בני ישראל COMMAND THE CHILDREN OF ISRAEL — What is said above? Moses said, "Let the Lord set [a man over the congregation]" (Numbers 27:16). The Holy One, blessed be He, said to him, "Instead of giving Me a command regarding My children, command My children regarding Me!" A parable! It may be compared to the case of a princess who was departing this world and gave her husband charge concerning her children, etc., as it is related in Sifrei Bamidbar 142:1.
קרבני MY OFFERING — this refers to the blood.
לחמי MY FOOD — this refers to the fat-portions, and so it states, (Leviticus 3:16) "And the priest shall burn them (the fat-portions) on the altar, it is the food of the fire-offerings" (Sifrei Bamidbar 142:2).
לאשי [MY FOOD] FOR MY FIRE OFFERING — i.e., the fat-portions that are assigned for the fire offerings of My altar (Sifrei Bamidbar 142:2).
תשמרו YE (the children of Israel) SHALL WATCH [TO OFFER TO ME] — This implies that priests, Levites and ordinary Israelites shall stand by watching when the sacrifices are offered (Sifrei Bamidbar 142:2). From this command they (the Rabbis) derived the law of, and instituted the Maamadot (representatives of the people who were present when the sacrificial service was performed) (Taanit 27a).
במועדו [YE SHALL OFFER TO ME] IN ITS APPOINTED SEASON — Every day is the "appointed season" for the continual offerings.

Verse 3

ואמרת להם AND THOU SHALT SAY TO THEM — This is an instruction to the Beth Din (Sifrei Bamidbar 142:3).
שנים ליום This may be understood according to its plain sense: TWO [LAMBS] FOR EACH DAY, But in the main it is intended to teach that they should be slaughtered at a spot opposite the day (i.e. the sun) — the morning continual offerings at the west and that of the evening at the east of the rings fixed in the ground and in which were inserted the animals feet (Sifrei Bamidbar 142:3; Yoma 62b).

Verse 4

את הכבש אחד THE ONE LAMB [SHALT THOU OFFER IN THE MORNING] — Although it has already been stated in the section beginning with the words,ואתה תצוה (Exodus 29:38 39): "Now this is what thou shalt offer … [The one lamb thou shalt offer in the morning]", that was an instruction for the days of the installation ceremony of the priests, but here it states the commands for all generations.

Verse 5

סלת למנחה FLOUR FOR A MEAL OFFERING — the meal offering that usually accompanies drink offerings (cf. Rashi on Leviticus 23:37).

Verse 6

העשיה בהר סיני WHICH WAS OFFERED BY MOUNT SINAI — i.e., like those continual burnt offerings which were offered during the days of the installation ceremony (which took place whilst the people were encamped by Mount Sinai). — Another explanation of העשיה בהר סיני is: It compares the continual burnt offering to the burnt offering of Mount Sinai — to that which was offered on the fifth day of the third month, before the Giving of the Torah (see Rashi on Exodus 19:11), of which it is written, (Exodus 24:6) "And he put it (the blood) in basins": this teaches, therefore, that it (the continual burnt-offering) requires a vessel for the reception of the blood (Sifra, Tzav, Chapter 18 8).

Verse 7

ונסכו (more lit., its pouring forth — i.e. its offering that was poured forth) — wine (cf. Numbers 15:5).
בקדש הסך CAUSING IT TO BE POURED FORTH ON THE HOLY SPOT — upon the altar they shall be poured out.
נסך שכר A POURING FORTH OF STRONG DRINK — wine that has intoxicating power. This excludes wine straight out of its vine press (new wine which is non-intoxicating) (Bava Batra 97a).

Verse 8

ריח ניחח A SMELL OF ניחח — one that causes satisfaction (נחת רוח) to Me, that I gave commands and My will was executed (Sifrei Bamidbar 143:3; see Rashi on Leviticus 1:9).

Verse 9

Verse 10

עלת שבת בשבתו lit., THE BURNT OFFERING OF A SABBATH ON ITS SABBATH — and not the burnt offering of this Sabbath on another Sabbath. Take the case

that one had not offered the sacrifice on this Sabbath, I might think that he might offer two on the following Sabbath! However, it states "on its Sabbath', thus showing that if its day (the Sabbath on which it had to be brought) be past, its (that Sabbath's) offering is cancelled (Sifrei Bamidbar 144:2).
על עלת התמיד BESIDES THE CONTINUAL BURNT OFFERING — these two lambs are additional offerings for the Sabbath besides (על) those two lambs of the continual burnt offering. And this tells us that these additional offerings must be brought only between the two continual offerings (Sifrei Bamidbar 144:2). Similarly in the case of all additional offerings it is stated that they are to be brought על עלת התמיד to point to this deduction.

Verse 11

Verse 12

ושלשה עשרנים AND THREE TENTH DEALS [OF FLOUR] — according to the rule of the drink-offerings which are brought with a bullock, for so are they (three tenth deals) fixed in the chapter dealing with the drink offerings (Numbers 15:9).

Verse 13

Verse 14

זאת עלת חדש בחדשו THIS IS THE BURNT OFFERING OF EVERY MONTH IN ITS MONTH — so that if its day is past its offering is cancelled, and there is no supplementary period for it (Sifrei Bamidbar 145:2).

Verse 15

ושעיר עזים וגו׳ AND ONE KID OF THE GOATS [FOR A SIN OFFERING] — All goats brought as additional offerings are intended to atone for those sins committed by causing uncleanness to the Sanctuary or its holy things, — all as is set forth in Treatise Shevuot 9a. The goat of the New Moon differs from other goats brought as additional offerings in the fact that the word לה׳ is stated of it: that it is a sin offering to the Lord. The Halachic explanation of this is: it is to teach you that it only makes atonement for uncleanness where there is no consciousness of having caused it either before or after it has been done (cf. Rashi on Leviticus 16:16 and Note thereon), so that no one is cognisant of the sin except the Holy One, blessed be He, alone. (It is a חטאת לה׳, a sin offering for a sin known only to God). And that the same applies to other goats (i. e., that they atone for uncleanness under the same conditions) we derive from the law about this goat. — But its Aggadic explanation is as follows: The Holy One, blessed be He, said, "Bring an atonement offering for My sake, because I diminished the size of the Moon" (cf. Rashi on Genesis 1:16; Shevuot 9a, Chullin 60b).
על עלת התמיד יעשה BESIDES THE CONTINUAL BURNT OFFERING SHALL IT BE DONE — It means: shall all this sacrificial rite (not the kid of the goats just mentioned) be done,
ונסכו AND ITS DRINK OFFERING — the words "and its drink-offering" do not refer to the goat, because sin-offerings have no drink-offerings.

Verse 16

Verse 17

Verse 18

כל מלאכת עבדה [YE SHALL DO] NO SERVILE WORK — even work that is a necessity for you, as, for instance, a matter that may become lost (that cannot be postponed without irretrievable loss) and which is permissible on the intermediate days of Passover and Tabernacles (lit., the week days of the Festival) is forbidden on the Festival itself (see Rashi on Leviticus 23:8).

Verse 19

פרים BULLOCKS — in allusion to Abraham, as it is said, (Genesis 18:7) "And unto the herd (the bullock) Abraham ran",
אילים RAMS — in allusion to the ram of Isaac (Genesis 22:13).
כבשים LAMBS — in allusion to Jacob, as it is said, (Genesis 30:40) "And the lambs did Jacob set aside". I saw this in the work of R. Moses the Preacher (see Rashi on Numbers 7:21).

Verse 20

Verse 21

Verse 22

Verse 23

Verse 24

כאלו תעשו ליום LIKE THESE YE SHALL OFFER ON EACH DAY — Like these mentioned: this implies that they are not continuously to decrease in number on each day as do the bullocks brought on the Feast of Tabernacles (Numbers 29:12—34) (Sifrei Bamidbar 147:2).

Verse 25

Verse 26

וביום הבכורים AND ON THE DAY OF THE FIRSTLINGS — The Feast of Weeks is called the firstlings of the wheat harvest (Exodus 34:22) because of the two loaves (Leviticus 23:17) which were the first of the wheat meal offerings which were brought from the new grain (Menachot 84b).

Verse 27

Verse 28

Verse 29

Verse 30

Verse 31

תמימים יהיו לכם ונסכיהם THEY SHALL BE TO YOU WITHOUT BLEMISH, AND THEIR DRINK OFFERINGS — i.e. the drink offerings, too, shall be without blemish. Our Rabbis learned from this that wine upon which mold shows itself is unfit for drink-offerings (Menachot 87a).

Verse 32

Verse 33

Verse 34

Verse 35

Verse 36

Verse 37

Verse 38

Verse 39

Verse 40

Verse 41

Verse 42

Verse 43

Verse 44

Verse 45

Verse 46

Verse 47

Verse 48

Verse 49

Verse 50

Verse 51

Chapter 29

Verse 1

Verse 2

Verse 3

Verse 4

Verse 5

Verse 6

מלבד עלת החדש BESIDES THE BURNT OFFERING OF THE NEW MOON — besides the additional offerings of the New Moon which is on the New Year Festival (the New Moon of the seventh month).

Verse 7

Verse 8

Verse 9

Verse 10

Verse 11

מלבד חטאת הכפורים BESIDES THE SIN OFFERING OF EXPIATION — i.e. the goat whose rite was performed within the Holy of Holies, which is mentioned in the Sedrah אחרי מות — for it, too, was a חטאת, a sin offering, (Leviticus 16:9).
ועלת התמיד AND THE CONTINUAL BURNT OFFERING — This means: and besides the continual burnt offering, ye shall offer these burnt offerings mentioned in v. 8.
ונסכיהם AND THEIR DRINK OFFERINGS — This word refers to the additional offerings which have been written about (v. 8) and to the word תעשו (which Rashi has supplied). It expresses a command: [besides the sin offering of expiation and] besides the continual burnt offering [and its drink offering] ye shall offer these (mentioned in v. 8) and their drink-offerings. Similar, too, is the meaning every time the expression נסכיהם is mentioned in connection with the offerings of the Festivals (that it alludes to the drink-offerings brought with the additional sacrifices of that Festival), except when used of those of the Feast of Tabernacles, (vv. 17—38) where all such expressions, — ונסכה and ונסכיהם and ונסכיה — which occur in the paragraph about them refer to the תמיד (cf. e.g., v. 15: עלת התמיד מנחתה ונסכה). Nor do they there express a command, for, indeed, the drink offerings that accompany the additional offerings are written down separately for each day (i.e., are specifically commanded for each day, cf. e. g., v. 18: ומנחתם).

Verse 12

Verse 13

Verse 14

Verse 15

Verse 16

Verse 17

Verse 18

ומנחתם ונסכיהם לפרים AND THEIR MEAL OFFERING AND THEIR DRINK OFFERINGS FOR THE BULLOCKS — The bullocks offered on the Feast of Tabernacles are seventy in all, in allusion to the seventy nations of the world, and they gradually decrease in number each day, an omen to them of gradual annihilation, but during the period when the Temple existed and these sacrifices were offered they protected them against this misfortune (cf. Sukkah 55b).
ולכבשים AND FOR THE LAMBS — in allusion to the Israelites who are called (50:17) "scattered lambs". — They (the lambs) are of fixed number each day (a symbol that the Israelites are fixed, imperishable), and their total is ninety-eight, serving to avert from them the ninety-eight curses which are set forth in Deuteronomy (Deuteronomy 28:15 ff.) — In the paragraph dealing with the second day of the Festival, it is said, (v. 19) ונסכיהם, and this is in reference to the two daily continual offerings (while the usual term is ונסכה corresponding to ומנחתה that precedes it), and it sometimes uses a modification of the terms usually employed in those paragraphs only in order that some teaching may be deduced from it, as our Rabbis, may their memory be for a blessing, said: in the case of the second day we have ונסכיהם, of the sixth ונסכיה, of the seventh כמשפטם (instead of the usual כמשפטה): the additional letters are מ and י and מ — so you have here מים, "water", — a suggestion that the libation of water on Tabernacles is of Biblical origin (מן התורה) (Sifrei Bamidbar 150; Shabbat 103b).

Verse 19

Verse 20

Verse 21

Verse 22

Verse 23

Verse 24

Verse 25

Verse 26

Verse 27

Verse 28

Verse 29

Verse 30

Verse 31

Verse 32

Verse 33

Verse 34

Verse 35

עצרת תהיה לכם ON THE EIGHTH DAY THERE SHALL BE A עצרת (RESTRICTION) FOR YOU — you are restricted in the doing of work. Another explanation of עצרת: Restrict yourselves from leaving Jerusalem: this teaches that this (the eighth day) requires that they should remain in Jerusalem overnight (that the pilgrims should not immediately at the termination of the seventh day begin their homeward journey) (Sifrei Bamidbar 151:1). And an explanation of it in the Agada is: because on all the seven days of the Festival they offered sacrifices corresponding in number to the seventy nations of the world, and they propose then to set forth on their way home, the Omnipresent says to them: 'I beg of you make a small banquet

for Me, so that I may have some pleasure from you exclusively” (Sukkah 55b).

Verse 36

פר אחד איל אחד ONE BULLOCK, ONE RAM — these are an allusion to Israel who form one nation: “Stay with me a little longer”. And this conveys the idea of God’s affection for Israel — just like children who think to take leave of their father to whom he says, “Parting from you is very hard to me; stay one day more”. — A parable! It may be compared to the case of a king who made a banquet etc., as it is related in Treatise Sukkah 55b. And in the Midrash of R. Tanchuma 4:8:17 it states: The Torah teaches you a rule of conduct — that he who has a stranger staying with him should give him on the first day fattened poultry to eat, on the morrow he should give him fish to eat, on the next day animal flesh; on the following day he should give him pulse to eat, and on the next day vegetables, diminishing gradually, just as was the case with the bullocks on the Feast of Tabernacles.

Verse 37

Verse 38

Verse 39

אלה תעשו לה׳ במועדיכם THESE YE SHALL OFFER TO THE LORD ON YOUR APPOINTED FESTIVALS — as something that is laid down as a duty, לבד מנדריכם BESIDES YOUR VOWS [AND YOUR FREEWILL OFFERINGS] — If on the Festival you wish to make a vow to bring a sacrifice, you have a duty ready at hand to your credit and you should bring it on that Festival; or in the case of vow-offerings and freewill offerings which you have vowed all the year, bring them on the Festival. — Perhaps it will be difficult for one to go up again to Jerusalem to bring his vow-offerings, and consequently he will transgress the command, (Deuteronomy 23:22) “Thou shalt not delay to pay it (thy vow)”.

Chapter 30

Verse 1

ויאמר משה אל בני ישראל AND MOSES TOLD THE CHILDREN OF ISRAEL — This is stated to separate this subject (of sacrifies) from the following (vows). Such is the opinion of R. Ishmael. What it means is: since up to now we have the words of the Omnipresent to Moses (Numbers 28:1—2: “And the Lord said to Moses, ‘Command the children of Israel, etc.’ ”) and the chapter about vows that follows begins with an utterance of Moses (“And Moses spake”), it is necessary first to make a break by stating that Moses in turn told this section to Israel (“And Moses told etc.”), for if this were not done it would imply that he did not tell them this section about the sacrifices, but began his address with the chapter about vows (Sifrei Bamidbar 152).

Verse 2

ראשי המטות [AND MOSES SPAKE TO] THE HEADS OF THE TRIBES OF THE CHILDREN OF ISRAEL] — This does not mean that he spoke only to the princes of the children of Israel and not to the people also, but that he showed respect to the princes by teaching them first and that afterwards he taught the children of Israel. This explanation seems to assume that this was the general method of instruction, but from what Biblical verse may we infer that this was so in the case of all addresses, and that this was no exceptional case? Because it says, (Exodus 34:31—32) "[And Moses called unto them], and Aaron and all the princes of the congregation returned unto him and Moses spake unto them; and afterwards all the children of Israel came nigh, [and he gave them all the commandments which the Lord had spoken to him in Mount Sinai]". But if this be no exceptional case, what reason is there for Scripture going out of its way to state it here? Because by specially stating that the laws about vows were taught in the first instance to the princes and afterwards to the Israelites, it intends to teach that the annulling of vows is really to be effected by one person who is expert in the Law, and that only if there be no such expert, may they be annulled by three ordinary persons. But you may perhaps say that the statement does mean that Moses spoke this section only to the princes of the children of Israel, and that Moses did not speak to them also, and that consequently nothing about the expert and laymen can be inferred! But it is stated here, "This is the word", and it is stated in the passage dealing with "animals slaughtered outside the sanctuary" (Leviticus 17:2) "This is the word". What is the case there? It was addressed to Aaron and to his sons and to all the children of Israel, as it is said there, "Speak unto Aaron [and unto his sons and unto all the children of Israel]"! So, too, this was addressed to all of them (and the reason why it is stated here is to tell us that the annulling of vows etc., as above) (cf. Sifrei Bamidbar 153:1; Nedarim 78a).
זה הדבר THIS IS THE WORD — Moses prophesied with the words (introduced his message by the statement), "Thus saith the Lord, About midnight [will I go into the midst of Egypt]" (Exodus 11:4), and other prophets also prophesied with "Thus saith the Lord", Moses, however, had an additional superiority in that he prophesied also with the expression "This is the actual word [that God hath spoken]" (Sifrei Bamidbar 153:2). Another explanation of זה הדבר THIS IS THE WORD: it is a restrictive phrase serving to intimate that the Sage (the expert) makes use of the expression "invalidating" (התרה), and the husband (dealing with his wife's vows), only of the expression "annulling" (הפרה), as is the language of Scripture here (e. g., in v. 9), and that if they (one of them) exchanges the expression, it (the vow) is not invalidated nor is it annulled as the case may be (Nedarim 78a).

Verse 3

נדר A VOW — This is when one says, Behold, I take upon myself an obligation which is as sacred to me as an offering, that I will not eat, or that I will not do such-and-such a thing. — One might think that if he swears that he will eat the flesh of an animal which has not been slaughtered properly according to the rite that I may apply to him the text, "He shall do according to all that goeth forth from his mouth"! It, however, says, "[If he takes an oath] to forbid something to himself", i.e., to forbid for himself something which is permissible to him — and not to make permissible that which is forbidden to him (Sifrei Bamidbar 153:4).
לא יחל דברו This is the same as לא יחלל דברו (the root of יחל being חלל): He shall not make his own word to bear a secular character (חולין) (Sifrei Bamidbar 153:4; see also Rashi on Leviticus 21:4).

Verse 4

בבית אביה [IF A WOMAN VOW] … BEING IN HER FATHER'S HOUSE — i.e., under her father's control, but the law here stated applies even though she be not in his house, provided she be under his control (Sifrei Bamidbar 153:4).
בנעורה IN HER YOUTH — when she is a נערה i.e., in the first state of womanhood, but not when she is a קטנה, a minor, and not when she is a בוגרת (in full womanhood); for so far as a minor is concerned, her vow is in general no vow (it is null and void ab initio), and a בוגרת is not under her father's control so that he can annul her vows. What is a קטנה, a minor, in respect to vows? We may gather this from what our Rabbis said: a woman of eleven years and one day must have her vows investigated until she reaches the age of twelve years; if she understands in Whose name it is that she has made the vow or in Whose name it is she has dedicated the thing, her vow is a vow, but a woman of twelve years and a day does not require any investigation regarding her vow (Niddah 56b).

Verse 5

Verse 6

ואם הניא אביה אתה BUT IF HER FATHER DISALLOWED HER — The Hebrew signifies, "if he withholds her" from the vow, that is to say, that he annuls it for her. I would not know what this expression הניא, "withholding", implies (i.e., how he withholds her) — but when it states, (v. 9) "But if on the day that he hears, he withholds her and annuls [her vows]", one must admit that "the withholding" consists in "annulling the vow" (i.e. in exclaiming מופר לך) (Sifrei Bamidbar 153:6). But still the plain meaning is that it is a term for "withholding" and "removing" (and the word והפר only shows how and by what means she is to be withheld from keeping her vow); and similar is (Numbers 32:7): "And wherefore do you remove (תניאון) [the heart of the children of Israel from the idea of passing over the land]"; and so, too, (Psalms 141:5): "Oil so choice, let not my head turn away (יניא), and similar, also, (Numbers 14:34): "And ye shall know My turning aside (תנואתי)" — i.e. ye shall know that ye have turned aside from Me.
וה' יסלח לה AND THE LORD SHALL FORGIVE HER — Of what is Scripture here speaking? Of a woman who, e.g., vowed that she would become a Nazarite, and whose father heard it and annulled it for her, but she knew it not, and transgressed her vow and drank wine or made herself unclean by means of a corpse. It is such a woman who requires forgiveness even though it (her vow) has been annulled. — And if those whose vows have been annulled require forgiveness in such a case, how much more is this so for those whose vows have not been annulled and have been transgressed! (Sifrei Bamidbar 153:6; cf. Kiddushin 81b).

Verse 7

ואם היו תהיה לאיש AND IF SHE BECOMES A MAN'S — (a phrase used for marriage). This refers to a woman who becomes betrothed (ארוסה). Or perhaps this is not so, but it refers to a married woman (one who has joined her husband; cf. Rashi on Leviticus 21:9). When, however, it says, (v. 11) "And if she vowed in her husband's house", it is evident that a married woman is being spoken of there, and here, therefore, the text is speaking of one who has been only betrothed. And it (the separate mention of her) is intended to make a different rule about her — that her father and her husband must annul her vow: if the father annulled and the

husband did not annul, or the husband annulled and the father did not annul, then this vow is not regarded as annulled, and it is not necessary to state (and it is a matter of course) that if one of them confirmed the vow the other has no power to annul it (Sifrei Bamidbar 153:7; Nedarim 67a).
ונדרה עליה [AND IF SHE BECOMES A MAN'S] AND HER VOWS ARE UPON HER — It means that she had made the vows being in her father's house, and her father did not hear them, and so they were neither annulled nor confirmed at the time of her betrothal (cf. Sifrei Bamidbar 153:7).

Verse 8

ושמע אישה וגו׳ BUT IF HER HUSBAND HEARD etc. — Here you have the case that if the husband confirmed the vow, it is confirmed. (That the father may confirm the vows of his betrothed daughter is given in v. 5 which statement applies also to w. 6 ff. — see Note).

Verse 9

והפר את נדרה AND HE (THE HUSBAND) ANNULS HER VOW — One might think that since confirmation by the husband does not require the assent of the father, in the case mentioned here it is annulled even if the father has not annulled it! It, however, states, (v. 17): "[These are the laws … relating to a father with his daughter] בנעריה בית אביה" which means: so long as she is בנעריה (not fully married) she is under her father's control (Sifrei Bamidbar 155; Ketuvot 46b).

Verse 10

כל אשר אסרה על נפשה יקום עליה [BUT THE VOW OF A WIDOW AND OF ONE WHO IS DIVORCED] EVERYTHING WHEREWITH SHE HATH BOUND HER SOUL SHALL STAND AGAINST HER — because she is not under the control of a father or under the control of a husband. Scripture is speaking of one who is a widow after having been fully married (נשואה) (Sifrei Bamidbar 154:1), but in the case of one who becomes a widow after having only been betrothed, if her husband dies his entire authority becomes emptied (void) and returns to her father (Nedarim 70a).

Verse 11

ואם בית אישה נדרה AND IF SHE VOWED IN HER HUSBAND'S HOUSE — Here Scripture is speaking of a woman who is fully married (Sifrei Bamidbar 154:1; Nedarim 67a).

Verse 12

Verse 13

Verse 14

כל נדר וכל שבעת אסר וגו׳ EVERY VOW AND EVERY BINDING OATH [TO AFFLICT THE SOUL HER HUSBAND MAY CONFIRM IT OR HER HUSBAND MAY ANNUL IT] — Because it states that a husband may annul his wife's vows, one might think that all vows are implied! It therefore states: "[every vow] …to afflict the soul" — he may annul only vows to afflict the soul, and these are set forth in Treatise Nedarim 79b.

Verse 15

מיום אל יום [BUT IF HER HUSBAND ALTOGETHER HOLD HIS PEACE AT HER] FROM DAY TO DAY — In order that you should not say that ביום שמעו in v. 13 means that the husband has the right of annulling from the time on the day when she made the vow to the same time on the next day (i.e., twenty-four hours), it accordingly states מיום אל יום, i.e., from the day when she makes the vow up to the next day, — to tell you that he may annul the vow only up to when it becomes dark, [for then another day begins] (cf. Nedarim 76b).

Verse 16

אחרי שמעו [BUT IF HE SHALL AT ALL ANNUL THEM] AFTER HE HATH HEARD THEM i.e., after he has heard and confirmed them — that he had said, "I am content with it", then if he turns and annuls it even on the same day (Sifrei Bamidbar 156:2).
ונשא את עונה HE SHALL BEAR HER INIQUITY — He takes her place. We learn from here that he who makes another take a false step takes his place in respect to all punishments which he would incur (Sifrei Bamidbar 156:2).

Chapter 31

Verse 1

Verse 2

מאת המדינים [AVENGE THE CHILDREN OF ISRAEL] OF THE MIDIANITES — but not of the Moabites, for the Moabites entered into the matter out of fear, because they feared that they might plunder them, since about them it was stated only, (Deuteronomy 2:9) "Do not contend with them in battle"; but the Midianites, however, had got excited (had interfered) in a quarrel that did not concern them. Another explanation of why God forbade them to wage war against the Moabites, and which explains at the same time why they had been forbidden to wage war against the Ammonites (cf. Deuteronomy 2:19): because, said He, of the two goodly doves (virtuous women) which I am to bring forth from them, — Ruth the Moabitess, and Naamah the Ammonitess [Solomon's wife] (Bava Kamma 38b).

Verse 3

וידבר משה וגו׳ AND MOSES SPAKE etc. — Although he had heard (v. 2) that his death was associated with this matter, he did it gladly and did not delay (Sifrei Bamidbar 157:2).
החלצו — Understand this as the Targum does in the sense of "equipped (חלוצי) for war", armed.
אנשים MEN — righteous men, and similar is, (Exodus 17:9) "Choose men for us", and so, too, (Deuteronomy 1:13) "men wise and well-known" (Midrash Tanchuma, Matot 3).
נקמת ה' "THE VENGEANCE OF THE LORD" — [This is really equivalent to the expression God had employed (v.2), "the vengeance of the children of Israel"], because whoever attacks Israel is as though he attacks the Holy One blessed be He.

Verse 4

לכל מטות ישראל [A THOUSAND OF EVERY TRIBE] THROUGHOUT ALL THE TRIBES OF ISRAEL — including, therefore, the tribe of Levi (Sifrei Bamidbar 157:3).

Verse 5

וימסרו SO THERE WERE HANDED OVER … [A THOUSAND OF EVERY TRIBE] — This serves to tell you in what high esteem the shepherds of Israel were really held — how dear they were to Israel. Up until they had heard of his approaching death what does it state? That Moses felt constrained to exclaim about them, "They are almost ready to stone me"! (Exodus 17:14). But when they heard that Moses' death was associated with the execution of vengeance upon Midian (cf. v. 2), they refused to go to war until they were "handed over" against their own will (Sifrei Bamidbar 157:3).

Verse 6

אתם ואת פינחס [MOSES SENT THEM … TO THE WAR], THEM AND PHINEAS — The repetition of the word אתם, "them", in association with Phineas' name tells us that Phineas was regarded as equal to all of them together. — But why did Phineas go and Eleazar did not go? The Holy One, blessed be He, said, "He who made a beginning with this meritorious work, in that he slew Kozbi the daughter of Zur (who was a Midianitess), let him complete it". — Another explanation why Phineas and not Eleazar went is that he went to take vengeance for Joseph, his mother's ancestor, as it is said, (Genesis 37:36) "And the Midianites sold him [unto Egypt]". And from where do we know that Phineas' mother was of the family of Joseph? Because it is said, (Exodus 6:25) that she was "one of the daughters of Putiel" (see Rashi on that verse) — which is explained to mean that she was of the seed of Jethro who used to fatten (פטם) calves for idolatrous worship, and of the seed of Joseph who overcame (שפטפט, who talked or argued with) his passions (cf. Sifrei Bamidbar 157:4; Sotah 43a). — Another explanation: Phineas went because he was the high priest anointed for war purposes (cf. Deuteronomy 20:2 and Rashi thereon) (Sotah 43a).
וכלי הקדש AND THE VESSELS OF HOLINESS … [WERE WITH THEM] — these were the Ark and the Golden Plate (which are termed קדש, "holiness", in Numbers 4:20 and Leviticus 8:9 respectively) (cf. Sifrei Bamidbar 157:4; Sotah 43a). — Because Balaam was with them (the Midianites) and through enchantment he made the kings of Midian float in the air and he himself floated with them, he (Phineas) showed them (held up to them) the Golden Plato upon which the Divine Name was engraved and they immediately fell to the ground. On this account it is said (v. 8) of the Kings of Midian that they were killed "upon those belonging to them who had been killed", meaning that they fell from the air upon those who had already been killed; and similarly of Balaam it is written in the book of Joshua (13:22): "[And Balaam the son of Beor did the children of Israel slay] upon those who were slain by them" (Midrash Tanchuma, Matot 2; Talmud Yerushalmi Sanhedrin 10:2).
בידו means IN HIS POSSESSION (not actually "in his hand", for it was impossible for him to hold these sacred objects in his hand), similar to (21:26) "And he took all his land from his possession (מידו)" (Sifrei Bamidbar 157:4).

Verse 7

Verse 8

חמשת מלכי מדין THE FIVE KINGS OF MIDIAN — But can I not see that Scripture has enumerated five; why, then, does it feel compelled to say that there were five? But it is to tell you that even as they had all been alike in the plot, so, too, they were treated alike in the punishment that befell them (cf. Rashi on Genesis 25:22, where, as here, the total of the names mentioned is stated) (Sifrei Bamidbar 157:5). — Balaam had gone there to receive the reward for the 24,000 whom he had made to fall of Israel through his counsel and now also he left Midian to meet Israel and gave them bad advice: viz., he said to them, "If, when you were 600,000 you were unable to overcome them, now you come to war against them with 12,000?" They gave him his full reward and did not stint it (they slew him) (Sifrei Bamidbar 157:5).
בחרב [BALAAM ALSO … THEY SLEW] WITH THE SWORD — He came against Israel exchanging his metier (the sword) for their metier (the mouth), for they conquer only through their mouth — through prayer and petition, and he came and availed himself of their craft to curse them with his mouth. They, therefore, also came against him and exchanged their craft for the craft of the heathen peoples who come with the sword, as it is said, (Genesis 27:40) "And by thy sword shalt thou live" (cf. Rashi on Numbers 22:23).

Verse 9

Verse 10

טירתם means the place of their scribes (notarii) — a term which is denoting the dwelling-place of their priests, those well acquainted with their laws (cf. Siphre). Another explanation is that it means the place of their princes, just as "the lords of the Philistines" (I Samuel 6:4) is translated in the Targum by "the טורני of the Philistines" (Sifrei Bamidbar 157:5).

Verse 11

ויקחו את כל השלל AND THEY TOOK ALL THE SPOIL…[AND THEY BROUGHT IT TO MOSES] — This tells us that they were pious and righteous men and were not suspected of robbery by stretching out their hand against the spoil without permission, for it is said, "they took all the spoil … [and brought it to Moses]" (Sifrei Bamidbar 157:5). About them it is expressed in the traditional literature (Songs 6:6): "They teeth are like a flock of ewes … [whereof all are perfect]' — i.e., even thy soldiers are all righteous (see Rashi Songs 4:2)
שלל are movables consisting of clothing and ornaments.
בז is booty of movables that are not ornaments.
מלקוח are men and cattle, but in any passage where שבי is written in association with מלקוח, the term שבי applies to men and מלקוח to cattle alone.

Verse 12

Verse 13

ויצאו משה ואלעזר הכהן AND MOSES AND ELEAZAR THE PRIEST WENT FORTH, because they saw the young men of Israel going out to snatch the spoil (Sifrei Bamidbar 157:5).

Verse 14

ויקצף משה על פקודי החיל AND MOSES WAS ANGRY WITH THE פקודי החיל — WITH THOSE APPOINTED OVER THE ARMY — This serves to teach you that every misdeed of a generation is attributed to the leaders since these have the power to protest (Sifrei Bamidbar 157:5).

Verse 15

Verse 16

הן הנה BEHOLD, THESE [WERE AN ENTICEMENT TO THE CHILDREN OF ISRAEL] — These : this word tells us that they recognised them, saying, 'This is the woman through whom so-and-so fell into sin" (Yalkut Shimoni on Torah 785).
בדבר בלעם [THESE WERE AN ENTICEMENT] THROUGH THE WORD OF BALAAM — He had said to them: Even if you bring together all the hosts that are in the world you cannot overcome them. Are you perhaps more numerous than the Egyptians who had six hundred chosen chariots? Come and I will give you counsel: Their God has a hatred of immorality, etc., as it is related in the chapter חלק (Sanhedrin 106a) and in Sifrei Bamidbar 157:6.

Verse 17

וכל אשה ידעת איש AND EVERY WOMAN WHO KNOWS MAN — i.e., who is fitted for cohabitation, even though she has never experienced it (Sifrei Bamidbar 157:6). As a test they made them (the women) pass in front of the Golden Plate, and if anyone was fitted for cohabitation her face turned green (Yevamot 60b).
הרגו [AND EVERY WOMAN THAT MAY KNOW MAN] … KILL — Why does it say this word again after having used it in the first half of the sentence? It is to show where the pause comes in the paragraph. So is the opinion of R. Ishmael (Sifrei Bamidbar 157:6). For if I read (omitting the word הָרְגוּ), וכל הטף בנשים וגו׳ ...הרגו כל זכר בטף וכל אשה ידעת איש "Now therefore kill every male among the little ones … and every woman … and all the little ones among the women … keep alive", I would not know whether they were to kill "every woman" together with the "males among the little ones" or were to keep them alive together with the "little ones among the women'. On this account הרגו is stated (added) at the end of the verse.

Verse 18

Verse 19

מחוץ למחנה [AND ABIDE YE] OUTSIDE THE CAMP — This means that they should not enter the forecourt of the Sanctuary (the מחנה שכינה cf. Rashi on 5:2).
כל הרג נפש WHOSOEVER HATH KILLED A PERSON — Rabbi Meir said: Scripture is speaking of one who killed a person with a weapon receptive of uncleanness, and Scripture teaches you that "a vessel" (any object) makes a man unclean through the connection thus formed with the corpse just as though he were actually in contact with the corpse itself. Or perhaps one might think that even though he had shot an arrow and killed him (in which case he was not "connected" by means of the arrow with the man he killed) he was to remain outside the camp as being unclean. It, however, says immediately afterwards "and whosoever hath touched anyone slain"; it

compares the person who kills to one who touches a slain person. How is it in the case of one who touches a corpse? He becomes unclean in consequence of the connection with it! So, too, one who kills becomes unclean only through some connection with it (the corpse) (Sifrei Bamidbar 127:1 on Numbers 19:16).
תתחטאו PURIFY YOURSELVES by means of the waters of sprinkling, as is the law in the case of other people who have become unclean by reason of a corpse. For even according to the opinion of those who say that the graves of heathens do not render Israelites unclean if they are under the same tent (roof) with them (i.e. the graves), because it is said, (Ezekiel 34:31) "And ye, My sheep, the sheep of My pasture, are men", which is explained to mean: You alone come under the term "men" (Yevamot 61a) — even such will admit that the corpses of heathens render an Israelite unclean through contact with and through carrying them, because the term אדם, man, is only used in reference to uncleanness caused by a "tent", since it states, (Numbers 19:14) "If a man (אדם) die in a tent".
אתם ושביכם [PURIFY] BOTH YOURSELVES AND YOUR CAPTIVES — Not that heathens are receptive of uncleanness and therefore require sprinkling, but such captives are intended as are of the same category as yourselves. What is the case with you yourselves? You are people in covenant with God! So, too, your captives when they come into the covenant with God, if they become unclean they require sprinkling (Sifrei Bamidbar 157:7).

Verse 20

וכל מעשה עזים AND EVERYTHING MADE FROM GOATS — everything: this serves to include objects made from the horns, claws and bones (Chullin 25b).

Verse 21

ויאמר אלעזר הכהן וגו׳ AND ELEAZAR THE PRIEST SAID etc. — Because Moses fell into anger (Numbers 31:14) he fell into error: there escaped him the laws concerning the removal of uncleanness absorbed by vessels which have contained the food of heathens. This, too, do you find was the case on the eighth day of the installing of the priests, as it is said, (Leviticus 10:16) "And Moses was angry with Eleazar and Ithamar", — he fell into anger, he fell into error (cf. 10:16 that he made an error regarding the שעיר החטאת which Aaron refused to eat). Similarly, also, when he said, (Numbers 20:10, Numbers 20:11) "Hear, now, ye rebels", … "he smote the rock"; it was through his anger that he made the mistake (Sifrei Bamidbar 157:9; cf. Pesachim 66b).
אשר צוה ה׳ וגו׳ [AND ELEAZAR SAID … THIS IS THE ORDINANCE OF THE LAW] WHICH THE LORD HATH COMMANDED [MOSES] — he associated the decision with his teacher (cf. Sifrei Bamidbar 157:9).

Verse 22

אך את הזהב וגו׳ ONLY THE GOLD etc. — Eleazar said: Although Moses has only admonished you concerning the laws of uncleanness caused by contact with a corpse, you must further be admonished concerning the laws of removing anything unclean that has been absorbed by vessels. The word אך is a restrictive term — it is as much as to say, "You are restricted from using vessels even after they have been cleansed from uncleanness caused by reason of a corpse until they shall have been cleansed also from what they have absorbed of that flesh which is forbidden as being that of an animal not killed in the proper manner." And our Rabbis said that the words אך את הזהב are intended to intimate that it is necessary to remove its rust before he does the rite of removing the forbidden food that has been absorbed. This, they say, is the purpose of the term אך, — that there should be no rust there: Only (אך) the metal — it shall be as it

should be (the metal without anything else, such as rust) (Yalkut Shimoni on Torah 785; Rabbenu Asher on Pesachim 30b states that this is to be found in Siphre, but it is missing in our editions of the work).

Verse 23

כל דבר אשר יבא באש ANYTHING THAT COMES ON THE FIRE, to boil something in it,
תעבירו באש YE SHALL PASS THROUGH THE FIRE — according to the manner in which it is used so is the manner in which it is cleansed from what has been absorbed: that vessel the use of which is by means of hot water he shall cleanse with hot water, and that which is used for roasted meat, as for instance, a spit and a grill, he shall make it white hot in the flame (Avodah Zarah 75b).
אך מי נדה יתחטא NEVERTHELESS IT SHALL BE PURIFIED WITH THE WATERS OF SPRINKLING — According to its plain sense this purification is to cleanse it from the uncleanness caused by a corpse. He said to them: the vessels require גיעול (the ceremony by which whatever has been absorbed will be given up) to cleanse them from the effect of having contained forbidden food, and also purification to cleanse them from the uncleanness caused by a corpse. But our Rabbis derived from here the law that in order to make them fit for use (to cleanse them entirely) from being forbidden, it (Scripture) made immersion in a ritual bath a requirement for metal vessels, and they explained the words מי נדה which are written here as denoting "waters that are proper for a נדה to immerse herself in". And how much is that? Forty Seahs (Avodah Zarah 75b).
וכל אשר לא יבא באש AND ALL THAT DOTH NOT COME IN THE FIRE — i.e., everything which is not used on fire, as for instance, cups and flasks which are used with cold articles, and which, therefore, absorb no forbidden food,
תעבירו במים YE SHALL PASS THROUGH WATER — He immerses them and that is sufficient. This refers only to metal utensils (Avodah Zarah 75b).

Verse 24

אל המחנה [YE SHALL BE CLEAN, AND AFTERWARDS] YE MAY COME INTO THE CAMP — into the camp where is the Divine Presence (מחנה שכינה), because a person unclean by reason of a corpse does not require expulsion from the camp of the Levites and the camp of the Israelites, (but only from the camp of the Shechina, and consequently the permission to come into the camp after purification must mean into the מחנה שכינה; Pesachim 67a; cf. Rashi on 5:2).

Verse 25

Verse 26

שאו את ראש means, TAKE THE CENSUS.

Verse 27

וחצית את המלקוח בין תפשי המלחמה וגו׳ AND THOU SHALT DIVIDE THE PREY INTO TWO PARTS: BETWEEN THEM THAT TOOK THE WAR UPON THEMSELVES, etc. — half of it for these and half of it for those.

Verse 28

Verse 29

Verse 30

Verse 31

Verse 32

ויהי המלקוח יתר הבז AND THE PREY, OVER AND ABOVE THE BOOTY … WAS [SIX HUNDRED THOUSAND etc.] — Because they had not been commanded (v. 28) to levy a tribute from the movables but only from the מלקוח (the men and cattle; cf. Rashi on v. 11) it (Scripture) writes this expression: ויהי המלקוח, that which came under the law of being divided (v. 27) and which also came under the law of tribute — which was over and above (יתר) the booty of the movables, אשר בזזו עם הצבא איש לו WHICH THE MEN OF THE HOST HAD PLUNDERED, EACH FOR HIMSELF, and which did not come under the law of being divided, — the number of sheep was etc. (i.e. צאן at the beginning of the second half of the verse means: the number of sheep).

Verse 33

Verse 34

Verse 35

Verse 36

Verse 37

Verse 38

Verse 39

Verse 40

Verse 41

Verse 42

וממחצית בני ישראל אשר חצה משה AND OF THE CHILDREN OF ISRAEL'S HALF WHICH MOSES DIVIDED among the congregation and which he had taken for them, מן האנשים הצבאים FROM THE MEN THAT WARRED.

Verse 43

ותהי מחצית העדה THE CONGREGATION'S HALF WAS so-and-so in number (as stated in the second half of this verse and in vv. 44—46).

Verse 44

Verse 45

Verse 46

Verse 47

ויקח משה וגו׳ AND MOSES TOOK [FROM THIS HALF OF THE CHILDREN OF ISRAEL ONE PART OUT OF EACH FIFTY] etc.

Verse 48

הפקדים means THOSE WHO WERE APPOINTED (not those who were counted, as e.g. in Numbers 3:39).

Verse 49

ולא נפקד means THERE IS NOT LACKING. Its translation in the Targum is לא שגא which, too, in the Aramaic language means "lacking", just as the words (Genesis 31:39) אנכי אחטנה "I will make good the shortage", are translated in the Targum by דהות שגיא מחנינא that which was lacking of the number (cf. Rashi on that verse), and so, too, is (I Samuel 20:18) "For thy seat וְיִפָּקֵד", i.e., the place where you sat will lack the man who usually sat there. And similar is (I Samuel 20:15) "וְיִפָּקֵד the place of David" — his place lacked, and no man sat there.

Verse 50

אצעדה — These are BANDS FOR THE FOOT (anklets).
וצמיד are BANDS FOR THE HAND (bracelets).
עגיל are EARRINGS.
וכומז is an ornament in the form of the womb — to atone for the thoughts their hearts had entertained for the daughters of Midian (Shabbat 64a).

Chapter 32

Verse 1

Verse 2

Verse 3

עטרות ודיבון וגו׳ ATOROTH AND DIBON etc. — These belonged to the land of Sihon and Og.

Verse 4

Verse 5

Verse 6

האחיכם SHALL YOUR BRETHREN — This denotes a question. (i.e., the ה prefixed is the interrogative particle).

Verse 7

ולמה תניאון means AND WHY WILL YE TURN ASIDE AND WITHHOLD their heart from passing over? — because they will think that you are afraid to pass over on account of the prospect of war and the strength of the cities and the peoples.

Verse 8

מקדש ברנע FROM KADESH-BARNEA — this was its name. There were two places called Kadesh (therefore this one is distinguished from the other by being called Kadesh-Barnea).

Verse 9

Verse 10

Verse 11

Verse 12

הקנזי [CALEB THE SON OF JEPHUNNEH] THE KENEZITE — He (Caleb) was the stepson of Kenaz (and therefore he is termed here the Kenezite), and Caleb's mother bore Othniel to him (to Kenaz) (and for this reason Othniel, the son of Kenaz is described in Joshua 15:17 as Caleb’s brother) (Sotah 11b).

Verse 13

וינעם means, AND HE MOVED THEM ABOUT; the word is of the same root as נע in (Genesis 4:12) "a wanderer (נע) and a vagabond".

Verse 14

לספות is similar in meaning to the verbs in (Isaiah 29:1): "add (ספו) year to year"; (7:21): "add (ספו) your burnt-offerings" — an expression denoting adding (The translation is: to add even more to the Lord's fierce anger against Israel).

Verse 15

Verse 16

נבנה למקננו פה WE WILL BUILD [SHEEP FOLDS] FOR OUR CATTLE HERE — They paid more regard to their property than to their sons and daughters, because they mentioned their cattle before their children. Moses said to them, "Not so! Make the chief thing the chief thing and what is subordinate subordinate. First build cities for your little ones and afterwards enclosures for your flocks" (cf. v. 24) (Midrash Tanchuma, Matot 7).

Verse 17

ואנחנו נחלץ חשים means, AND WE SHALL ARM OURSELVES SPEEDILY, the last word being the same as in (Isaiah 8:3): "the spoil hasteth, the prey speedeth (חש)" and in (Isaiah 5:19), "Let Him make haste, let Him speed."
לפני בני ישראל BEFORE THE CHILDREN OF ISRAEL - i.e. at the head of the troops, because they were mighty men; for thus is it said of Gad, (Deuteronomy 30:20): "He teareth the arm, with the crown of the head". Moses distinctly stated this to them in Sedrah אלה הדברים (Deuteronomy 3:18): "And I commanded you at that time … Ye shall pass over armed before the children of Israel, all ye men of valour". And regarding the siege of Jericho it is written, (Joshua 6:13): "And the armed men (החלוץ) went before them"— this refers to the tribes of Reuben and Gad who thus fulfilled the conditions they had laid down.
וישב טפנו AND OUR LITTLE ONES SHALL STAY, so long as we are with our brethren waging war,
בערי המבצר IN THE FORTIFIED CITIES which we will now build (cf. v. 16 with v. 36).

Verse 18

Verse 19

מעבר לירדן וגו׳ ON THE SIDE OF THE JORDAN AND YONDER — i.e., on the western side.
כי באה נחלתנו FOR OUR INHERITANCE HAS COME [TO US] — This means: by that time we shall have already received it on the eastern side.

Verse 20

Verse 21

Verse 22

Verse 23

Verse 24

לצנאכם FOR YOUR SHEEP — This word is from the noun form which is found in (Psalms 8:8): "Sheep (צנה) and oxen, all of them", where, too, there is no א intervening between the נ and the צ. The א which here comes after the נ is in place of the ה of צנה (and לצנאכם is not the same form as לצאנכם with an inversion of the א and נ). I learned this from the work of R. Moses the Preacher.
והיצא מפיכם תעשו AND DO THAT WHICH HATH GONE OUT FROM YOUR MOUTH, as a vow to the Most High God (cf. Numbers 30:3), because you have taken it upon yourselves to pass over for war until the end of the subjugation and division of the land; — for Moses asked of them only, (v. 22): "Let [the land] be subdued and afterwards ye may return", but they undertook, (v. 18): "[we will not return to our houses] until [the children of Israel] have inherited", so you see that they made an additional promise, to stay on the western side the seven years during which they were dividing the land. And so, indeed, they did (cf. Joshua XXII.).

Verse 25

ויאמר בני גד AND THE CHILDREN OF GAD SAID, all of them as one man (ויאמר is the singular form of the verb, whilst the subject בני גד is the plural; cf. Rashi on Exodus 19:2 s. v.).

Verse 26

Verse 27

Verse 28

. ויצו להם AND HE GAVE CHARGE — This is the same as, and he gave charge concerning them. The words imply: and to watch over the fulfilment of the agreement they had made he appointed Eleazar and Joshua. The use of the ל in להם here is the same as in (Exodus 14:14): "The Lord will fight לכם for you."

Verse 29

Verse 30

Verse 31

Verse 32

ואתנו אחזת נחלתנו AND LET POSSESSION OF OUR INHERITANCE BE WITH US [ON THIS SIDE OF THE JORDAN] — it is as much as to say: (ואתנו) in our hands and in our ownership let the possession of our inheritance be on this side.

Verse 33

Verse 34

Verse 35

Verse 36

ערי מבצר וגדרת צאן FORTIFIED CITIES AND ENCLOSURES FOR SHEEP — This end of the verse is to be connected back with the beginning of the paragraph (v. 24): And the children of Gad built these cities to be fortified cities and enclosures for sheep.

Verse 37

Verse 38

ואת נבו ואת בעל מעון מוסבת שם AND NEBO AND AND BAAL-MEON, THEIR NAMES BEING CHANGED — Nebo and Baal-Meon were names of idols, and the Ammonites used to call their cities by the names of their gods. The children of Reuben therefore changed their names into other names. This is the meaning of מוסבת שם: Nebo and Baal-Meon were changed to other names.
ואת שבמה AND SIBMAH — i.e., they built (cf. v. 37) Sibmah also. This is identical with Sebam that is mentioned above (v. 3).

Verse 39

ויורש — Understand this as the Targum does "AND HE DROVE OUT", for the expression ריש is used in two different meanings, in the sense of ירושה (the Kal), "inheriting", and in the sense of הורשה (the Hiphil) which denotes driving away and expelling (see Rashi on Numbers 14:24).

Verse 40

Verse 41

חותיהם This is rendered in the Targum by THEIR VILLAGES.
ויקרא אתהן חות יאיר AND HE CALLED THEM "THE VILLAGES OF JAIR" — Because he had no children, he named them after himself, as a memorial.

Verse 42

ויקרא לה נבח AND HE CALLED IT NOBAH — The word לה has no Mappik in the ה (as the word לָהּ "to it", usually has). Now I have seen the following in the work of R. Moses the Preacher: Because this name did not remain permanently to it, therefore the letter ה is weak (without a Mappik), — the implication of his explanation being that it (the word לה) is the same as לא "not". But I wonder what explanation he will give of the two words similar to it, (Ruth 2:14): "And Boaz said לָהּ", and (Zechariah 5:11): "to build a house לָהּ".

Chapter 33

Verse 1

אלה מסעי THESE ARE THE JOURNEYS (STAGES) [OF THE CHILDREN OF ISRAEL] — Why are these stations recorded here? In order to make known the loving acts of the Omnipresent: that although He had decreed against them to make them move about and wander in the wilderness, you should not think that they wandered and moved about without cessation from one station to another station all the forty years, and that they had no rest, for you see that there are here only forty-two stages. Deduct from them fourteen, all of which were their stopping places in the first year after they left Egypt, before the decree was made, viz., from the time when they journeyed from Rameses until when they came to Rithmah whence the spies were sent out — as it is said. (Numbers 12:16): "And afterwards the people journeyed from Hazeroth, [and encamped in the wilderness of Paran], whereupon the Lord said unto Moses, (Numbers 13:2) "Send thee men [who may search out the land]"; and here (v. 18) it states, "and they journeyed from Hazeroth and they encamped in Rithmah", so you learn that it (Rithmah) is in the wilderness of Paran. — Further deduct from them the eight stages which were after Aaron's death viz., those from Mount Hor to the plains of Moab in the fourtieth year (v. 38). It follows that during the whole of the thirty eight years they made only twenty journeys. This is excerpted from the work of R. Moses the Preacher. — R. Tanchuma gave another explanation of it (of the question why these stages are here recorded). A parable! It may be compared to the case of a king whose son was ill and whom he took to a distant place to cure him. When they returned home the father began to enumerate all the stages, saying to him, "Here we slept, here we caught cold, here you had the head-ache, etc." (Midrash Tanchuma 4:10:3.

Verse 2

Verse 3

Verse 4

ומצרים מקברים AND THIS EGYPTIANS WERE BURYING [ALL THEIR FIRSTBORN] — they were busily occupied in their mourning.

Verse 5

Verse 6

Verse 7

Verse 8

Verse 9

Verse 10

Verse 11

Verse 12

Verse 13

Verse 14

Verse 15

Verse 16

Verse 17

Verse 18

וישבו ברתמה AND THEY ENCAMPED IN RITHMAH — It was so called with reference to the slanderous speech of the spies, uttered there, as it is said, (Psalms 120:3-4): "What shall be given unto thee, and what shall be done more unto thee, thou deceitful tongue? Sharp arrows of the mighty with coals of juniper (רְתָמִים).

Verse 19

Verse 20

Verse 21

Verse 22

Verse 23

Verse 24

Verse 25

Verse 26

Verse 27

Verse 28

Verse 29

Verse 30

Verse 31

Verse 32

Verse 33

Verse 34

Verse 35

Verse 36

Verse 37

Verse 38

על פי ה' [AND AARON THE PRIEST WENT UP TO MOUNT HOR] BY THE WORD (lit., BY THE MOUTH) OF THE LORD— This phrase tells us that he died by the Divine Kiss (Bava Batra 17a; cf. Rashi on Numbers 20:26).

Verse 39

Verse 40

וישמע הכנעני AND THE CANAANITE HEARD This is stated here to tell you that Aaron's death was indeed the news he heard — that the clouds of glory that until now had protected Israel had departed, and he therefore believed that liberty was now given to wage war against Israel. It is on this account that this is again recorded here (see Rashi on Numbers 21:1) (Rosh Hashanah 3a).

Verse 41

Verse 42

Verse 43

Verse 44

בעיי העברים IN IJE-ABARIM — The word denotes waste places and heaps of rubbish, the same as, (Micah 1:6): "[will make Samaria] into a heap (עי) in the field"; (Psalms 79:1): "They have made Jerusalem into heaps (עיים)" (cf. Rashi on Numbers 21:11).

Verse 45

Verse 46

Verse 47

Verse 48

Verse 49

מבית הישמת עד אבל השטים [AND THEY ENCAMPED] … FROM BETH-JESIMOTH EVEN UNTO ADEL-SHITTIM — Here it tells you that the extent of Israel's camp was twelve miles, for Rabba bar bar Chana said: "I myself have seen that place etc., and it is three Parsangs (12 miles) square" (Eruvin 55b).
אבל השטים — The plain of Shittim had the name אבל (cf. Rashi on Genesis 14:6).

Verse 50

Verse 51

כי אתם עברים את הירדן וגו׳ והורשתם וגו׳ WHEN YOU ARE PASSED OVER THE JORDAN … YOU SHALL DRIVE OUT [ALL THE INHABITANTS] — But had they not already been admonished about this several times? But it is repeated here in this form "when you are passing over the Jordan", and not as usual "when you come into the land" because Moses spoke thus to them: While you are passing through the Jordan on dry land, you shall pass over having this in view (that you will drive out the inhabitants), and if you do not, the waters will come and overwhelm you. And so indeed we find (Jos. 4:10) that Joshua spoke to them while they were still standing in the Jordan (Sotah 34a).

Verse 52

והורשתם means, AND YE SHALL DRIVE OUT.
משכיתם — Understand this as the Targum does: THEIR SPOTS FOR WORSHIP; it is called משכית (connected with the root סכה = סכך "to cover"), because they used to cover the ground with marble stone to prostrate themselves upon it with hands and feet stretched forth, as it is said, (Leviticus 26:1): "And no stone of משכית, covering (no mosaic) shall ye put on your ground to prostrate yourself upon it" (because this is a heathen form of worship).
מסכיתם — Understand this as the Targum does: their molten gods.

Verse 53

והורשתם את הארץ (lit., ye shall drive out the land) — this means: and you shall dispossess it of its inhabitants, and then, וישבתם בה YOU WILL DWELL IN IT — i.e., you will be able to remain in it, but if not, you will not be able to remain in it.

Verse 54

אל אשר יצא לו שמה — This is an elliptical verse, the meaning being, the place where the lot falleth to anyone, that shall be his.
למטות אבותיכם ACCORDING TO THE TRIBES OF YOUR FATHERS [YE SHALL DIVIDE INHERITANCE] — i.e., according to the number of those who came out of Egypt (Bava Batra 117a; cf. Rashi on Numbers 26:55). Another explanation: ye shall divide it into twelve districts, as is the number of the tribes.

Verse 55

והיה אשר תותירו מהם THEN IT SHALL COME TO PASS THAT THOSE WHOM YE LEAVE OF THEM shall be a misfortune for you.
לשכים AS שכים IN YOUR EYES — as pins which prick out your eyes: the Targum translation of יתדות pins or pegs, is שיכיא (cf. e. g., Exodus 27:19).
ולצנינים — The lexicographers explain it in the sense of a hedge of thorns (צנינים is another form of צנים) so that the meaning here is: they will become as something which hedges you in, enclosing and imprisoning you in order that none can go forth nor come in (cf. Rashi on Joshua 23:13) (The meaning is they will hedge you in on all sides בצדיכם.
וצררו אתכם — Understand this as the Targum does: ("and they will distress you").

Chapter 34

Verse 1

Verse 2

ואת הארץ אשר תפול לכם וגו׳ THIS IS THE LAND THAT SHALL FALL TO YOU [FOR AN INHERITANCE] — Since many divine commandments have to be practised in the Land of Canaan and are not to be practised outside the Land, it (Scripture) feels compelled to describe the limiting lines of the boundaries of its sides all round, in order to tell you: from these boundaries and inward the divine commands have to be practised (cf. Gittin 8a).
תפול לכם [THE LAND WHICH] FALLS FOR YOU — Because it (the land) had to be divided by lot (which is said to fall upon a person), the division is expressed by the term "falling". — And a Midrashic explanation of why this term is employed here states: It is because the Holy One, blessed be He, cast down (more lit., made fall) from heaven the tutelary angels of the seven nations of Canaan and placed them in fetters before Moses, He said to him, (Deuteronomy 1:21) "Behold the Lord God hath put before thee the tutelary angels of the land" — there is no more strength in them (cf. Midrash Tanchuma, Masei 4 and Rashi on Deuteronomy 2:31).

Verse 3

והיה לכם פאת נגב THE SOUTHERN פאה SHALL BE UNTO YOU — i.e. the south side which extends from east to west (פאה does not here mean "corner").
ממדבר צין FROM THE WILDERNESS OF ZIN which is next to Edom there begins the south-east comer of the land of the nine tribes. How is this so? Three lands are situated to the south of the Land of Israel, one next to the other; part of the land of Egypt, and the whole land of Edom, and the whole of the land of Moab. The land of Egypt is at the south-west comer, as it is said in this section, (v. 5) that the southern boundary shall pass "from Azmon unto the Brook of Egypt, and the goings out thereof shall be at the sea" (i.e., at the west). Now the Brook of Egypt ran along the whole land of Egypt — as it is said, (Joshua 13:3) "From the Shihor which is before Egypt", and divided the land of Egypt from the land of Israel. The land of Edom is next to it on its east. The land of Moab is next to the land of Edom at the end of the south side of Palestine at the east (i.e., the south eastern corner). — When Israel came out of Egypt if the Omnipresent had wished to bring about their

entry into the Land quickly, he would have led them over the Nile northwards and they would have so come into the Land of Israel; but He did not do so. This is what is stated, (Exodus 13:17) "And God did not lead them by way of the land of the Philistines" who dwelt by the sea in the west of the land of Canaan — just as it is said of the Philistines, (Zephaniah 2:5) "inhabitants of the sea-coast, the nation of the Cherethites". — However, He did not lead them by that route, but He made them travel round, and brought them out by a southern route into the wilderness. It is that which Ezekiel (Ezekiel 20:35) calls "the wilderness of the peoples", because several peoples dwelt beside it. Then they proceeded along the south always from the west to the east, until they came to the south of the land of Edom. They asked of the king of Edom that he should permit them to pass by way of his land and to enter the land of Palestine along its (Edom's) breadth. He, however, refused, and they were compelled to travel along the whole south of Edom until they came to the south of the land of Moab, as it is said, (Judges 11:17) "And also to the king of Moab he sent, but he refused". Therefore they proceeded along the whole south of Moab unto its very end, and from there they turned their faces to the north until they had gone along its entire eastern boundary along its breadth. Wien they arrived to the end of its eastern side, they came upon the land of Sihon and Og who dwelt at the east of the land of Canaan with the Jordan dividing them (dividing the land of Sihon and Og from Canaan). This is what is stated in the history of Jephthah, (Judges 11:18) "Then he (Israel) went through the wilderness and compassed the land of Edom and the land of Moab and came by the east of the land of Moab". They subdued the land of Sihon and Og which was on the north of Moab and they approached right up to the Jordan, which was opposite the north-west corner of the land of Moab. It follows therefore that the part of the land of Canaan which was on the west side of the Jordan had its south-east corner next to Edom. (This explains the words והיה לכם פאת נגב … על ידי אדום in our text.)

Verse 4

ונסב לכם הגבול מנגב למעלה עקרבים — AND YOUR BORDER SHALL TURN ABOUT SOUTHWARD OF THE ASCENT OF AKRABBIM - In every passage in this chapter where it says ונסב or ויצא, it tells us that the boundary line was not straight (i.e., did not continue in the same straight line) but in proceeding it projected outside this straight line. Here, the word means that the boundary line left the straight line and bent towards the north of the world (in a northerly direction) diagonally towards the west, and the boundary line passed by the south of the Ascent of Akrabbim. Consequently the Ascent of Akrabbim was within the boundary (cf. Rashi on Joshua 15:3).
ועבר צנה IT SHALL PASS ALONG TO ZIN — צנה is the same as אל צין "to Zin", like מצרימה "to Egypt".
והיו תוצאתיו AND THE GOINGS OUT THEREOF SHALL BE — i.e., its ends shall be at the south of Kadesh-Barnea.
ויצא חצר אדר AND IT SHALL GO FORTH TO HAZZAR-ADDAR — the boundary spreads and widens towards the north of the world and extends further obliquely to the west, till it comes to Hazzar-Addar, thence to Azmon and thence to the Brook of Egypt. — The expression ונסב, "and it turned about" which is used here (v. 5) ("and the boundary shall turn about") is employed because it wrote, "and it shall go forth to Hazzar-Addar", i.e., that it began to widen out when it had passed Kadesh-Bamea. The widening of that strip which projected northwards was only from Kadesh-Barnea to Azmon (i.e. that strip widened only between those two places), but from Azmon and further on, the boundary became narrower and turned towards the south and came to the Brook of Egypt, and thence westwards to the Great Sea

which is the western boundary of the entire land of Israel. It follows, therefore, that the Brook of Egypt is at the south-west corner.

Verse 5

והיו תוצאותיו הימה AND ITS GOINGS OUT SHALL BE AT THE SEA i.e. at the western boundary, because the southern border does not extend any more west of there and further on.

Verse 6

וגבול ים These words (apparently unconnected with what follows) mean: AND THE WESTERN BOUNDARY, what forms that?
והיה לכם הים הגדול THE GREAT SEA SHALL BE UNTO YOU for the boundary.
וגבול AND THE BOUNDARY — the נסין which are in the sea also belong to the boundary; they are what are called isles in O. F. (Gittin 8a).

Verse 7

גבול צפון means THE NORTHERN BOUNDARY.
מן הים הגדול תתאו לכם הר ההר FROM THE GREAT SEA YE SHALL MARK OUT YOUR LINE UNTO MOUNT HOR, which is at the north-west corner, and its top slopes down and goes to the sea and there is some of the breadth of the sea inward of it and outside it.
תתאו means, YE MUST MOVE IN A SLANTING DIRECTION so as to move from west to north to Mount Horayot
תתאו is an expression denoting "a slanting turn", just as in (1 Kings 14:28) "the slanting chamber (תא) of the runners" and (Ezekiel 40:10) "and the slanting chambers (תאי) of the gate". The תא is a chamber with a sloping roof, which is called in O. F. apendiz; it is called תא because it leans and slopes (a lean-to or panthouse).

Verse 8

מהר ההר FROM MOUNT HOR you shall turn about and go along the northern boundary towards the eastern side and you will arrive at the "Entrance to Hamath", which is Antioch.
תוצאות הגבול means, THE END OF THE BOUNDARY. In every passage where it is said "the end of the boundary", either the boundary ends there entirely, not passing further on at all (cf. Rashi on v. 5), or from there it spreads and widens, projecting from the straight line backwards to extend itself further on in a more slanting direction than the first widening. And relative to the measurement of the first breadth it calls it תוצאות (the goings forth, the endings), because there that measurement ends.

Verse 9

והיו תוצאתיו חצר עינן AND THE GOINGS OUT OF IT SHALL BE AT HAZAR-ENAN — This place was the end of the northern boundary. It follows therefore that Hazar-Enan was in the north-east corner. And from there, "you shall then turn yourselves" toward the eastern border.

Verse 10

והתאויתם לכם YOU SHALL TURN YOURSELVES to the eastern boundary. והתאויתם denotes turning round, just the same as תתאו (v. 7).
שפמה TO SHEPAM on the eastern boundary, and from there to Riblah.

Verse 11

מקדם לעין ON THE EAST SIDE OF AIN — עין is the name of a place. The boundary went to the east of it, and consequently Ain is within the boundary and was part of the land of Israel.
וירד הגבול AND THE BOUNDARY SHALL GO DOWN — The more the boundary goes from north to south it goes down more and more.
ומחה על כתף ים כנרת קדמה AND SHALL SMITE UPON THE SLOPE OF THE SEA OF CHINNERETH EASTWARD, so that the sea of Chinnereth is within the border to the west, and the boundary is on the east (קדמה) of the sea of Chinnereth. From there it went down to the Jordan. The Jordan extends from the north to the south in a slanting direction, inclining towards the east, but comes nearer the land of Canaan opposite the sea of Chinnereth, and extends further along the eastern side of the land of Israel [opposite the sea of Chinnereth] until it falls into the Salt Sea. There the boundary ends through its goings forth into the Salt Sea from which, too, is the beginning of the boundary at the south-east comer. — Here, then, you have a description of what bounds it (the land) round about on its four sides.

Verse 12

Verse 13

Verse 14

Verse 15

קדמה מזרחה — At the front of (קדם) the world which is the east; for the east side is called פנים, "the face" (equivalent to קדם, "front"), the west is called "behind", and therefore the south is on the right and the north on the left (cf. Rashi on Exodus 27:13 and Note thereon).

Verse 16

Verse 17

אשר ינחלו לכם [THESE ARE THE … MEN] WHO SHALL TAKE POSSESSION OF THE LAND לכם — i.e., for you. Each prince was the agent of his tribe and divided the inheritance of the tribe amongst the families and again amongst the men, selecting for each a portion fitting for him. What they did was done (was legal) just as if they (the tribes) had appointed them their representatives (Kiddushin 42b). — It would not be right to explain this לכם as all other לכם ("to you") which occur in the Bible, for if so it should have written יַנְחִילוּ לכם (Hiphil), "they will give the possession to you". But יִנְחֲלוּ (Kal), implies that they themselves take possession לכם, "for you" and in your place. It is the same as, (Exodus 14:14): "The Lord will fight לכם" — "for you".

Verse 18

לְנָחֵל את הארץ [YE SHALL TAKE ONE PRINCE OF EVERY TRIBE], TO TAKE POSSESSION OF THE LAND i.e. that he should take possession and apportion

it in your place (i.e. as your representatives; cf. Rashi on previous verse).

Verse 19

Verse 20

Verse 21

Verse 22

Verse 23

Verse 24

Verse 25

Verse 26

Verse 27

Verse 28

Verse 29

לנחל את בני ישראל [THESE ARE THEY WHOM THE LORD COMMANDED] TO DIVIDE THE INHERITANCE UNTO THE CHILDREN OF ISRAEL — It means, that they should make you inherit it according to its divisions (according to how it should be divided amongst families and again amongst individuals).

Chapter 35

Verse 1

Verse 2

ומגרש AND OPEN LAND — an area consisting of an open space round about the city outside it, serving to beautify the city. It was not permitted to build houses there nor to plant vineyards nor to sow a plantation (cf. Arakhin 33b).

Verse 3

ולכל חיתם means FOR ALL THEIR NEEDS (the needs of their life; it does not mean for their animals) (Nedarim 81a).

Verse 4

אלף אמה סביב A THOUSAND CUBITS ROUND ABOUT — But afterwards, (v. 5) it says, "two thousand cubits"!? How can that be? They assign two thousand for them (for the Levites) round about their cities, and of these, the innermost thousand serves as the "open space" and the outermost is for fields and vineyards (Sotah 27b).

Verse 5

Verse 6

Verse 7

Verse 8

Verse 9

Verse 10

Verse 11

והקריתם — This verb קרה (in the Hiphil) denotes "preparing". Similarly it says, (Genesis 27:20) "Because the Lord thy God made it ready (הקרה) before me"(Sifrei Bamidbar 159:4).

Verse 12

מגאל — [AND THE CITIES SHALL BE UNTO YOU AS A REFUGE] מגאל — i.e. as a refuge on account of the avenger of blood, — he who is the near relative of the murdered man.

Verse 13

שש ערי מקלט [AND AS TO THE CITIES WHICH YOU SHALL GIVE] SIX CITIES OF REFUGE (THERE SHALL BE FOR YOU] — This tells us that although Moses during his life-time set aside three cities on that side of the Jordan (Deuteronomy 4:41), they did not provide refuge until the three had been

chosen which Joshua assigned in the land of Canaan on the west side of the Jordan (Sifrei Bamidbar 160:2; Makkot 9b).

Verse 14

את שלש הערים וגו׳ THE THREE CITIES [YE SHALL GIVE ON THIS SIDE OF THE JORDAN etc.] — Although in the land of Canaan there were nine tribes and here (on the east side of the Jordan) there were only two and a half, it (Scripture) gives them (the latter) the same number of cities of refuge, because in Gilead (on the east side) murderers were more numerous, as it is written, (Hosea 6:8): "Gilead is a city of them that work iniquity, it is covered with footprints of blood" (Makkot 9b; cf. Sifrei Bamidbar 160:2).

Verse 15

Verse 16

ואם בכלי ברזל הכהו BUT IF HE SMOTE HIM WITH AN INSTRUMENT OF IRON — This is not speaking of one who kills inadvertently, who is mentioned near this (in the preceding verse), but of one who kills intentionally; and its purpose is to teach us that with whatever instrument one kills, it is necessary that it must have a size sufficient to cause death, because in the case of all of them (vv. 17, 18) it is said, אשר ימות "[an instrument] by which one may die", the Hebrew of which we translate in the Targum by, "[an instrument] which is of such a size that one may die through it" — in the case of all, except in that of iron, because it is manifest and known to the Holy One, blessed be He, that iron kills whatever size it may be (however small it is), even a needle. Therefore the Torah does not assign a size to it by writing,אשר ימות בה (Sifrei Bamidbar 160:3; Sanhedrin 76b). And if you say that Scripture is speaking of one who kills inadvertently, — but surely it says lower down, (v. 23) "Or with any stone, even though one may die by it, (even though it is large enough to kill him) seeing him not", which certainly is by inadvertence. This proves as regards the cases mentioned before it, that Scripture is speaking of one who kills intentionally.

Verse 17

באבן יד [AND IF HE SMOTE HIM] WITH A STONE IN THE HAND (more lit., with a stone of the hand) — one which has the size of a full hand (i.e., large enough to fill a hand).
אשר ימות בה signifies: which has a size sufficient to cause death, as the Targum understands it. Because it has been stated, (Exodus 21:18) "If one man smote another with a stone" but it assigned no size for it, one might think that it means, whatever size it may be! Therefore it states here, "by which one may die" (Sifrei Bamidbar 160:3).

Verse 18

או בכלי עץ יד OR [IF HE SMITE HIM] WITH A WEAPON OF WOOD IN HIS HAND — Because it has been stated, (Exodus 21:20) "And if a man smite his bondman or his bondwoman with a rod", one might think that it means whatever size it may be! Therefore it states here of the wooden instrument אשר ימות בה — meaning that it must have a size sufficient to cause death (Sifrei Bamidbar 160:4).

Verse 19

בפגעו בו WHENEVER HE MEETETH HIM [HE MAY KILL HIM] — even in the cities of refuge.

Verse 20

בצדיה — Understand this as the Targum does: בכמנא, BY LAYING IN WAIT.

Verse 21

Verse 22

בפתע means BY ACCIDENT. In the Targum it is translated by בתכיף (in close proximity), meaning that he was very close to him and so had no time to be careful about him (i.e. to be on his guard not to kill him; see Rashi on Makkot 7b).

Verse 23

או בכל אבן אשר ימות בה OR WITH ANY STONE WHEREBY ONE MAY DIE, he smote him.
בלא ראות — i.e. that he (the slayer) did not see him (Not: without anyone having seen him, i.e. that there were no witnesses).
ויפל עליו AND HE CAST IT UPON HIM — From here (i.e. from these words) they (the Rabbis) said: he who kills inadvertently by way of a falling movement goes into exile (i.e. must escape to and reside in a city of refuge); he who kills by way of an upward movement does not go into exile (Makkot 7b; cf. our Note on Exodus 21:13).

Verse 24

Verse 25

עד מות הכהן הגדול [HE SHALL ABIDE IN IT] UNTIL THE DEATH OF THE HIGH PRIEST — because he serves to cause the Shechinah to dwell in Israel and thereby prolong their days, whilst the murderer serves to make the Shechinah depart from Israel and thereby shortens the days of the living. He is therefore not worthy that he should stand before a High Priest (that he should be anywhere near a High Priest) (Sifrei Bamidbar 160:9). Another explanation why he had to remain there until the High Priest's death: Because the High Priest should have prayed that this misfortune might never happen in Israel in his days (cf. Makkot 11a).
אשר משח אתו בשמן הקדש WHO WAS ANOINTED WITH THE HOLY OIL — According to its plain sense, this is one of the elliptical sentences — for it does not expressly mention who anointed him, but it is the same as אשר משחו המושח בשמן המשחה "… the High Priest whom he who carried out the anointing had anointed with the holy oil". — Our Rabbis, however, expounded it in Treatise Makkot 11b as a proof for a law: that it intends to teach that if, before the sentence on him has been passed that he should go into a city of refuge, the High Priest died and they appointed another in his stead, and afterwards his case was finished, he returns home through the death of the second, because it is said, אשר משח אתו. But did he anoint the priest or did the priest anoint him? for the words may literally mean either: "until the death of the High Priest whom he (the murderer) had anointed" or "until the death of the High Priest who has anointed him (the murderer)" — but the words are used to include the case of the High

Priest who was anointed in his days (and whom, as it were he had anointed), viz., that he (such a High Priest) causes him to return home through his death.

Verse 26

Verse 27

אין לו דם [AND THE AVENGER OF BLOOD MAY SLAY THE MURDERER] THERE IS NO BLOOD GUILT FOR HIM (more lit., he has no blood) — He is as one who has killed a dead man, who is one who has no blood (cf. Rashi on Exodus 22:1).

Verse 28

Verse 29

בכל מושבתיכם [AND THESE THINGS SHOULD BE AN ORDINANCE OF JUSTICE FOR YOU] IN ALL YOUR DWELLINGS — This teaches that the "minor Sanhedrin" functions outside the Land as long as there is [the main] one functioning in the Land of Israel [namely, while the Temple stood].(Makkot 7a)

Verse 30

כל מכה נפש וגו׳ HE WHO KILLETH A PERSON, etc. — This means: He who proposes to kill him because he had killed a person,
לפי עדים ירצח BY THE EVIDENCE OF WITNESSES ONE SHALL SLAY [THE MURDERER] — who testify that intentionally and after due warning he killed him.

Verse 31

ולא תקח כפר AND YE SHALL TAKE NO RANSOM — He (the murderer) shall not be freed by a monetary payment (Ketubot 37b).

Verse 32

ולא תקחו כפר לנוס אל עיר מקלטו AND YE SHALL TAKE NO RANSOM לנוס TO HIS CITY OF REFUGE — The last words are the same as לָנֻס אל עיר מקלטו, "ye shall take no ransom for one who is fled to a city of refuge, i.e., one who has killed inadvertently, cannot be freed from exile by money, by giving a ransom (Sifrei Bamidbar 160:12), לשוב לשבת בארץ THAT HE SHOULD RETURN TO DWELL IN THE LAND before the High Priest dies.
לנוס (the passive participle) has the same meaning as לָנֻס (the active participle), just as, (Micha 2:8) "שובי מלחמה", which means "those who have returned from battle"; and so, too, (Zephaniah 3:18) "those who are removed far (נוני) from the appointed season"; (Joshua 5:5): "for they were circumcised men (מולים)". Now just as you say שוב in reference to one who has already returned, and מול in reference to one who is already circumcised, so you can say לנוס in reference to one who has already fled. It calls him נוס (the passive participle), as much as to say "one who was made to flee"; — But you say that לנוס means "to flee" (the infinitive) explaining it thus: "ye shall take no ransom for one who ought to flee", in order to free him from exile (cf. Sifrei Bamidbar 160:12), then I do not know how it can be said: "ye shall take no ransom … so that he should return to dwell in the land", for you see, he has not yet fled, so from where shall he return?

Verse 33

ולא תחניפו means AND YE SHALL NOT [MAKE THE LAND] WICKED, as it is translated in the Targum: לא תחיבון.

Verse 34

אשר אני שכן בתוכה [AND YE SHALL NOT DEFILE THE LAND] … IN WHICH I DWELL — It means: Do not do anything defiling to the land so that you will make Me dwell amidst its uncleanness,
כי אני ה שכן בתוך בני ישראל' FOR I, THE LORD, DWELL AMONG THE CHILDREN OF ISRAEL — for even when they (the Israelites) are unclean My Shechinah remains amongst them (Sifrei Bamidbar 160:15).

Chapter 36

Verse 1

Verse 2

Verse 3

ונוסף על נחלת המטה AND IF THEY BECOME WIVES TO ANY SONS OF THE OTHER TRIBES … THEN WILL THEIR INHERITANCE] BE ADDED TO THE INHERITANCE OF THE TRIBE [WHEREUNTO THEY SHALL BELONG] — for her son will be her heir and the son reckons his pedigree after his father’s tribe.

Verse 4

ואם יהיה היבל may mean AND IF THERE WILL BE THE JUBILEE — From this R. Judah said: The observance of the Jubilee will cease at some time or other (Sifra, Vayikra Dibbura d'Nedavah, Section 13 1 on Leviticus 2:14).
ואם יהיה היבל may mean, too: AND WHEN THERE WILL BE THE JUBILEE [THEN WILL THEIR INHERITANCE BE ADDED TO THE INHERITANCE OF THE TRIBE TO WHICH THEY SHALL BELONG] — meaning: This is no sale of land so that it returns to the original owner at the Jubilee, for a heritage never returns. Therefore even when the Jubilee will be, the inheritance will not return to its tribe, and it will follow that it will be added על נחלת המטה אשר תהיינה להם TO THE INHERITANCE OF THE TRIBE TO WHICH THEY SHALL BELONG.

Verse 5

Verse 6

Verse 7

Verse 8

וכל בת ירשת נחלה AND EVERY DAUGHTER THAT INHERITS A POSSESSION because her father had no son, [SHALL BE WIFE, etc.]

Verse 9

Verse 10

Verse 11

מחלה תרצה וגו׳ MAHLA, TIRZA etc., — Here it enumerates them according to their superiority over one another in years for they were married in the order in which they were born. But everywhere else in the Bible it enumerates them according to their intelligence: This tells us that they were all equal (cf. Bava Batra 120a; Rashi on Numbers 27:1).